

Doug Campbell

A life-long interior designer who *chooses* to be happy despite fighting ALS on a daily basis.

Chapter 01 - 1:10

Introduction

Announcer: Doug Campbell was born in Galveston, Texas, but moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, at the age of five with his family in 1952. The Campbells remained in the area and Doug graduated from Edison High School, after which he attended Oklahoma State University and earned a degree in interior design. After college graduation, he immediately found employment in his chosen field in Tulsa. In 1977, he began Campbell Design Associates of which Carolyn Fielder Nierenberg has been a part since the beginning. Doug's career has taken him to projects all over North America, but no matter where he works his design philosophy remains the same—"less is more." His work has been published in many magazines, and not only was he involved in the beginning of the American Society of Interior Designers, but he served as state president and on the national board. Doug also served for many years on the boards for both Gilcrease and Philbrook Museums, as well as the board for 108 Contemporary Gallery in Tulsa.

In this interview you will hear Doug Campbell talk about his career and his fight with ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease.

Voices of Oklahoma, preserving Oklahoma's legacy...one voice at a time.

Chapter 02 - 4:45

Campbells Move to Tulsa

John Erling: My name is John Erling and today's date is June 23, 2016. Doug, would you state your full name, please?

Doug Campbell: Douglas Alvin Campbell.

JE: Your date of birth?

DC: August 15, 1947.

JE: And your present age?

DC: Sixty-eight.

JE: Where are we recording this interview?

DC: In my conference room in my office in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

JE: What is the name of your office?

DC: Campbell Design Associates.

JE: We'll talk more about that later. Where were you born?

DC: Galveston, Texas.

JE: Tell us your mother's name.

DC: Mildred Margarite Campbell.

JE: Tell us a bit about her, where she grew up, and a little bit about her personality.

DC: Well, she was a Texan. Grew up in a very religious family. Her father was interested in politics, however. They started out in Wichita Falls, Texas, and then ended up in Houston. And her father was actually involved in politics there in Houston.

I, fortunately, was able to get to know my grandparents on my mother's side, which was nice.

JE: What was your mother's personality like?

DC: Very strict. She was a school teacher so she was interested in education, but she was very, very strict in her approach to life.

JE: She was very religious?

DC: Yes, yes.

JE: And she was very strict in her Christianity?

DC: Yes. And every time the doors in the church were unlocked we were there.

JE: So that could be three times a week or more?

DC: Oh, at least, yes.

JE: And that was in Galveston.

So then your father's name?

DC: Earl Maitland Campbell. He was from Michigan. He and my mother met at a social function when he was in the military during World War II, in Galveston.

JE: What was his personality like?

DC: When I think of my dad I think of him sitting in the living room reading. He didn't interact with us that much, he would mainly sit and read, and was not a social person at all.

JE: What did he do for a living?

DC: He was a postal supervisor, he managed a postal station in Brookside.

JE: But in Galveston?

DC: In Galveston he was released from the army and started his career in Galveston.

JE: And that career was?

DC: It was the US Postal Service.

JE: Okay.

DC: He was orphaned when he was fourteen years old so he did not finish his high school, and certainly didn't go to college because he was responsible for helping raise money to keep his sisters housed and so forth. So he went immediately to work, and then he did get a GED later, but he was hardworking.

JE: Was he adopted eventually by someone?

DC: No, no.

JE: Lived in a foster home?

DC: No.

JE: Orphanage?

DC: No. He went to work. He lived in Michigan, so he became a crew member on boats in the Great Lakes.

JE: From fourteen on he was on his own?

DC: Yes.

JE: Well, that shows that this guy was a pretty strong person.

DC: Yes, well, he was. He was very quiet, he didn't have a lot to say.

JE: So your mother was a disciplinarian then?

DC: Disciplinarian and very social. She was the butterfly. Her passion was the church. She loved to sing and very musical and so forth.

JE: Did you have brothers or sisters?

DC: Yes, I had two brothers. My older brother was four years older. He was very, very bright. Earl Jr. was his name and he was very, very interested in science. He, like me, graduated from Edison High School here in Tulsa. We moved to Tulsa when I was five years old.

JE: The names of your brothers?

DC: Uh, Earl Campbell Jr., and Wayne Campbell.

JE: Why did they move to Tulsa?

DC: Because my older brother, Earl Jr., had a serious asthma problem and the salt air was exacerbating the problems. So the doctor suggested, "You need to move inland."

My father got a transfer and it was to Tulsa, so here we came.

JE: So it was because of your brother's asthma that you came to Tulsa and flourished?

DC: Yes, yes.

JE: That move to Tulsa was in what year?

DC: Nineteen fifty-two.

JE: And you were how old?

DC: Five.

JE: You remember the first house you ever lived in?

DC: Yes.

JE: Tell us about it.

DC: Well, it was a rental house and it was over near Admiral and Harvard. We lived there for a year and then we moved to a house on 42nd Street behind Pennington's Drive-In. So I grew up thinking Pennington's was the neighborhood restaurant.

JE: Did you run over there a lot?

DC: Well, really, you had to be in a car—

JE: Yeah.

DC: ...to be serviced though.

JE: Right.

DC: I would ask my friends, "Let's go to Pennington's."

JE: And they did?

DC: Yes.

JE: Was that a house you owned then or—

DC: Yes, no it was a house we owned.

Chapter 03 - 4:17

Early Interests

John Erling: Was there anything at the early outset of your life, as you look back, of your interests, say in architecture or whatever? Was anything planted then?

Doug Campbell: Well, I was always intrigued by architecture and the resulting interiors that I would see. I was always astounded by the grandeur of spaces I would see, you know, photographed in New York or Washington and so forth.

I enjoyed going to the Tulsa Train Station to pick up my grandmother when she'd take the train in from Houston to visit us a couple of times a year. And I used to love that art deco building. I still do, go to ten concerts there today.

So I had an interest in architecture from a very young age.

JE: Five or six years old.

DC: Yes. Then also, in this first house I mentioned, we had a neighbor who worked for an interior designer, which I never even heard of that at the time. He talked to me about what he did for a living, which was helping this designer produce interiors and get things done and get things made. I was just fascinated by that and he was very gracious to share his work history with me.

JE: Elementary school then, what school did you go to?

DC: Holmes Elementary, which is where the Tulsa Ballet is now on Peoria and 45th.

JE: Anything as far as a teacher or anything in your elementary years that might have been encouraging to you?

DC: I had a wonderful art teacher, she was very, very encouraging. And, of course, obviously, I was the star of the class, but, uh, no. Anyway, we had very good teachers in this school.

And what was interesting is my mother also was a teacher in the school and taught fifth grade. I had to behave myself because guess who got reported very quickly because all the teachers knew my mother?

JE: Did your mother teach you?

DC: They wouldn't let me be in her class. So I had another fifth grade teacher.

JE: Other things other than architecture, did you like furniture, flowers, design at that early age?

DC: Well, I was just interested in anything relating to architecture interior design, from a very young age. And then in 1958, my parents built a new house and let me be involved in making selections in décor, colors, fabrics used on the window coverings, and that sort of thing. That was sort of my first project.

JE: They were very encouraging then of your interests?

DC: Yes, my mother recognized that I had an interest and definitely encouraged it.

JE: Do you recall them taking you to Philbrook or Gilcrease and all that back then?

DC: Yes, very much so. We used to visit on Sunday afternoons, particularly after we had lunch after church. Quite often we would go to Philbrook. In those days the organ was played every Sunday afternoon and I used to love that, the fact that there was a pipe organ in a residence was incredible.

Also, Clark Field, whose basket collections are one of the top in the country and it's located at Philbrook. He used to give a talks in the basement and I was always just fascinated to listen to him talk.

And then they would take me out to Gilcrease also. I remember asking numerous times, "Who's that man sitting on the porch over at the house that's over on the grounds there?"

And they said, "That's Mr. Gilcrease." So he would watch his guests enter the museum.

JE: So even though you didn't meet him you can say you saw him.

DC: Absolutely.

JE: Right. So you were seven, eight years old when this is happening?

DC: Well, I was eleven when we built this new house.

JE: And that was your experience going to Gilcrease and—

DC: Yes.

JE: ...Philbrook.

DC: Yes, yes.

JE: During that time period. Did you get to design your own room?

DC: Yes, I did. My mother let me go wild, shall we say? I had a very limited budget so I went to a hobby shop that had burlap for pennies per yard. I bought burlap and cut it and glued it myself. I was, I think, twelve years old at the time. And I glued it to the wall and I painted it the color that I wanted it to be, which was a real rich blue. She let me select some ready-made curtains for the windows and so forth. That was my first serious design project, was my room.

JE: Sure. Well, did they give you the money to do that or did you have to earn it?

DC: I had a paper route and earned the money.

Chapter 04 - 3:00

Teacher Influence

John Erling: Were you allowed to see movies?

Doug Campbell: Yes, but we, for many, many years did not have a television. My mother and father did not think that that was something that we needed to waste our time doing.

JE: This would have been in the?

DC: Mid 50s.

JE: In the mid 50s.

DC: They did allow us to go see certain television programs at neighbor's houses. Every Wednesday night we went to see *I Love Lucy* at the next door neighbor's house.

They eventually, in the late 50s bought a TV, and we succumbed to the wilds of modern culture.

JE: Was there a movie or movie stars in about that era that you enjoyed?

DC: More glamorous movies, I was never a western fan, but more glamorous movies that were filmed in New York or took place in New York or Los Angeles always appealed to me.

JE: Because you'd see the fancy houses and—

DC: Right.

JE: ...buildings?

DC: Exactly.

JE: You're on to junior high school, which was which one?

DC: Wright Junior High School, which is right behind Holmes in those days. And a new building and had a wonderful, wonderful art teacher there as well.

The most interesting thing I remember from junior high school was Mrs. Gordy, who was our math teacher. And she told us that someday we would have a laptop computer

that we would use. At the time, computers were the size of buildings, I mean, they enormous, and the thought of someday having a computer that we could hold was beyond belief. But she saw the future and knew that that would happen.

JE: And that would have been in 1960?

DC: I was in junior high from '60 to '63, right.

JE: So in that time period, what foresight.

DC: She was amazing. Math was never my favorite subject but she made it fascinating all—

JE: Amazing what teachers can do.

DC: Absolutely. Always remember her.

JE: Into high school, high school is at?

DC: Edison.

JE: Anybody there who influenced you?

DC: Again, wonderful art program teachers at the time. I enjoyed my time at Edison, I will say, but I sat there at graduation in 1965, looking around at this room of 750 graduates going, “Who are these people? I’ve never even seen them in the hall, much less know their names.”

JE: Yeah.

DC: So the scale of the school was overwhelming.

JE: But you knew a few?

DC: Oh, sure.

JE: You had some friends there?

DC: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

JE: But 750 was just...

DC: And I had particularly a group of friends that we were in Cub Scouts together in elementary school and went through junior high and high school together. And still see some of those people today too.

JE: Did you show a flair for art, drawing, painting, or anything?

DC: Yes, I did enjoy it very much and learned how to sketch during that time period. How to see things in three dimensions and sketch pretty rapidly.

JE: That was something that probably helped you later on in life.

DC: Oh, absolutely. It’s something that has been hugely helpful and coming up with design schemes, you sketch it out. I particularly enjoy doing that in front of clients because they go like, “Wow, he did that so fast.” It conveys the story, it conveys a concept very easily.

Chapter 05 - 3:22**Church Organs**

John Erling: Did you show any interest in music?

Doug Campbell: Yes, I was in the mixed chorus at Edison and always performed vocally in church choirs and was always involved in that aspect.

Then I also started taking piano lessons when I was very young.

JE: How old?

DC: Seven, as I remember. And took piano lessons for about eight years and then I became interested in organ, particularly the pipe organ. I was fascinated by what an organist is able to achieve. So I started taking organ lessons.

Before I got my driver's license I would take money that I'd learned and get a bus ticket and go to downtown Tulsa. So I was fourteen, fifteen years old. On Saturday afternoons I'd find churches that were unlocked, like Trinity Episcopal or Boston Avenue or First Methodist that had these huge, wonderful pipe organs.

I would go in and check and see if the organ was unlocked and sometimes they were and sometimes they weren't. First of all, the architecture always fascinated me, I was just overwhelmed by the beauty of our churches in downtown Tulsa. But what was really fun was to sit down at those magnificent organs with four or five ranks and the pedals and so forth and take what I'd learned in my organ training and blast away.

JE: Your organ training must have been pretty good because some of those organs may have been more sophisticated than the one you were being trained on.

DC: Oh, absolutely. Definitely.

JE: But you were able to figure it out?

DC: Sure.

JE: So then I've got to ask you, certainly, people are in the church on Saturday afternoon and they're getting ready for Sunday, and they must have wondered as they looked in the sanctuary, "What's going on here?"

DC: Well, no, the way I perceived it was they assumed I had the right to be there and that I was doing something, so they didn't bother me. I never had one person say a word to me.

JE: You played well enough for them to think, "Oh, that's the guy who knows what he's doing"?

DC: Well, they—

JE: I mean, if you were just doing ta-ta-ta-ta—

DC: Right.

JE: ...they would have gone up to.

DC: No, I was very interested in the music of Bach and the classic composers.

JE: So that's what you were playing?

DC: Yes. In fact, I did a music workshop at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. The summer that I was fifteen. And my piece that I played for critique was "To God in Fugue in D Minor," by Bach.

JE: Wow.

DC: Which is an extremely powerful piece. And the organ at OU in the chapel was just magnificent so I did well on that.

JE: I'm just thinking how gutsy you were.

DC: Well—

JE: At thirteen or fourteen years old to walk in and play an organ in one of these very nice churches.

DC: Well, I didn't think too much of it at the time, it just seemed logical that they should be put to good use, and I would do the best I could with it.

JE: You know, I asked you to describe your parents. At that point, describe yourself, I mean, were you a forward kind of person? Were you social?

DC: I would not call myself a social person. I was interested in interactions with people, I was fascinated by that. But I wasn't super social either.

JE: Well, I admire your confidence to go into those churches and do that.

DC: Well—

JE: I could never imagine myself doing anything like that.

DC: Well—

JE: It almost seemed natural, right?

DC: It didn't seem foreign to do that because I enjoyed it tremendously.

Chapter 06 - 3:00

Quit Playing Organ

John Erling: You graduate from Edison in what year?

Doug Campbell: Nineteen sixty-five.

JE: Nineteen sixty-five, and then what?

DC: I looked at different schools. I was interested in interior design but I was also interested in architecture. So I was trying to decide which direction to go. My dream was to go to Auburn University in Alabama, because they have a magnificent interior design program. But Oklahoma State University also had a very, very good program and a very good school of architecture, so because of tuition costs and so forth I went to Oklahoma State.

JE: Well, you were fortunate to have a school with that kind of reputation—

DC: Yes.

JE: ...nearby.

DC: Yes, very definitely. And it made it easy. Also during my time in senior high school and college I worked for, again, a neighbor that I'd gotten to know who had a wedding event planning business that did flowers and we put together the entire wedding events. And so it was easy to come back from school on the weekends and work.

JE: So flowers were a fascination for you?

DC: Yes, yes.

JE: You enjoyed that and...

DC: Enjoyed that and the color, you know, putting together colors and putting together events for brides and so forth. It was fascinating.

JE: At OSU, were you playing the organ?

DC: As an elective. I took organ at OSU, yes.

JE: You play for anything special there at OSU?

DC: Well, not at OSU, but one of my fraternity brothers asked me to play at his wedding and it was here in Tulsa. I practiced and practiced and practiced and practiced. I have friends that are natural musicians, they can sit down and play for hours and never even look at a piece of music or whatever. I was just the opposite, I had to have everything precisely written out and so forth.

Anyway, I played for this wedding and let me say this, the groom never spoke to me again. Ah, it was a disaster, so I gave up my music career at that point.

JE: You quit, right there?

DC: Yeah. I mean, that was like, "Okay, I just don't have this." I enjoyed it but at that point I went, "Okay, now it's not going to work."

JE: But you played before some crowds, didn't you? When you played Bach and all that.

DC: Just a few judges.

JE: Okay, so it wasn't a public performance.

DC: It wasn't, it wasn't, right.

JE: It was your first public performance?

DC: Yeah.

JE: And did you freeze a little, is that what you're saying?

DC: Yeah, it was not a pretty picture. I felt so sorry for the bride, but she never spoke to me again either.

JE: As you look back, do you feel bad that you quit then? Because you were very accomplished. And when you said you had to have everything written out, yes, you had to play by notes.

DC: Right.

JE: Some can play by ear, but you could play by notes. You had something about you that you could have continued playing.

DC: I don't know, at that point I just went, "I just don't have the natural talent." So...

JE: Well, you did. Well, I guess there's a difference between a natural talent or learning by rote.

DC: Right.

JE: And if I do this and do that and do that, is that which category you'd put yourself in?

DC: Yes, definitely.

JE: But you sure accomplished a lot by rote.

DC: Definitely.

JE: But you don't look back and regret—

DC: No, no.

JE: ...that you quit?

DC: That was just not to be.

Chapter 07 - 3:00

Less Is More

John Erling: In high school and at OSU, were you dating?

Doug Campbell: Yes, yes, I dated. I'd joined a fraternity so we had a lot of social functions that required having dates for and so forth.

JE: Did you meet anybody special at OSU?

DC: Well, I did. In my junior year I met Myrna who at the beginning of my senior year and the beginning of her junior year we got married.

JE: So what was her maiden name?

DC: Myrna Hallman.

JE: That click right off? You felt rapport?

DC: We did, we were introduced by mutual friends. One of them called me one day and says, "We've met someone for you."

And I said, "Okay." So, anyway, then we hit it off immediately.

JE: Eventually married, what year were you married?

DC: Nineteen sixty-eight.

JE: Children from that marriage?

DC: Yes, two sons.

JE: And their names?

DC: David Brandon Campbell and Brent Douglas Campbell.

JE: They're married and now you have grandchildren.

DC: Yes, four granddaughters. One family lives in Athens, Georgia, and the other in Scarsdale, New York.

JE: When you graduated from OSU you graduated in '69.

DC: Right.

JE: Then do you go to work right away?

DC: I came to Tulsa because I wanted to live here. Myrna had one year to finish in education at OSU, and so we wanted to be somewhere close, you know, together. I knew there wouldn't be work in Stillwater so I came to Tulsa, and the first job I applied for I was hired.

JE: And who hired you?

DC: J. Richard Blissit.

JE: And he had that business a while?

DC: Yes.

JE: So he had established a name, perhaps?

DC: Yes he had and he did more contemporary work, which was very interesting to me. I was more oriented in that direction.

I had some wonderful professors at OSU. Christine Salmon is a doctor of architecture. They were from Pennsylvania, and her husband had been brought to OSU as the head of the School of Architecture, so couldn't teach in the same department that he was the head of, so she was an interior designer and she was absolutely wonderful. She would take us on field trips to New York and introduce us to incredible worlds and incredible people and teach us incredible philosophies.

So she had an architectural bent in her teaching and it was something that I responded to very, very greatly. One of the things that Dr. Salmon taught us was, "Less is more," which is a very, very, very famous quote from the mid-century architect Mi Sandoro. It means sometimes when you have less of something it becomes more important than if you have a lot of clutter surrounding either a piece of architecture or, in my case, an interior. That if you make a statement with fewer pieces it's more than if you have a bunch of clutter. All of a sudden you don't see anything, you don't focus on anything.

JE: Then there are those who would say less is bore.

DC: Less is a bore, yes. My friend, Charles Fodray would tell me that.

Chapter 08 - 1:10

Clean Lines

John Erling: Describe your style of design. Is it the same as when you came out of OSU?

Doug Campbell: I've done a huge range of things and what I've tried to do is what was appropriate. And certainly things evolved over the years, but certainly there was always a common theme of not a lot of clutter and a statement or focal point to a room that was either architectural, like a fireplace, for instance, in the living room and maybe an outstanding rug. You know, as a foundation for the room. And then the furniture would be subservient to those stronger architectural pieces or focal points.

JE: But if you had your druthers, would contemporary be the design that you would have followed?

DC: Yeah, it's clean lines. I'm not a big, huge fan of a lot of extraordinarily stark interiors, but clean lines would be what I would—

JE: You like a warmer field?

DC: Yes.

JE: Than contemporary offers.

DC: Yes. Warmer and more comfortable, would be my lots of it, but I've also done a lot of historic properties and have tried to do those in a clean way, but be respectful of the fact that they're more traditional from that standpoint.

Chapter 09 - 2:18

Campbell Design

John Erling: You worked for Richard Blissit for?

Doug Campbell: I worked for him from 1969 to in early 1977. I decided it was time to start my own firm.

JE: Then you started in 1977?

DC: Yes.

JE: Campbell Design.

DC: Yes. Associates, Inc.

JE: What made you feel that you could go out on your own?

DC: I was doing a lot of projects and I think Richard had a lot of other interests and so I was taking care of a lot of projects and I had a lot of clients who said, "We'll come with you," and they did.

JE: Okay. They came with you, you had a good foundation, so you started Campbell Design in 1977. And here in 2016, you're approaching forty years of this.

DC: Yes. And actually, Carolyn Fielder Nierenberg, we've worked together since 1972, when she graduated from OSU. We started working together and then she came when I started the company in '77, and we've worked together all these years. So I've now turned ownership of Campbell Design over to Carolyn.

JE: Under Campbell Design you designed many homes in Tulsa to the rich and famous.

DC: Well—

JE: To the wealthy and to others.

DC: And to whoever enjoyed our services. And certainly done projects from coast to coast and Canada to Mexico, so all over the United States. I've been blessed to do some wonderful, wonderful projects.

JE: Isn't that something that your reputation is all word of mouth?

DC: Well, a lot of it is certainly word of mouth. Some things were published in national magazines and they would see it. And then it's amazing the connections that Tulsans have too, so that was a great deal of it as well.

JE: Remember some of the magazines that you may have been in?

DC: *Southern Living*, *Traditional Home*, certainly *Oklahoma Magazine*, and *Tulsa Home and Garden*, and so forth, when that existed. Yeah.

JE: Might have got a call from New York and said, "I saw this in *Southern Living* and I'd like hire you."

DC: Right, right.

JE: Did you ever get to a point you had so many calls, so much business coming in then you had to begin to add staff?

DC: Right, but I didn't want to have too many people, so I think the most we ever had was seven. I found that five is a good number, just because I didn't want to be a manager of a lot of people either.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

DC: So we had no interest in growing the firm any larger than five to seven.

Chapter 10 - 2:20

Buying Trips

John Erling: How many countries have you visited looking for furniture, rugs, and all that?

Doug Campbell: Well, I used to go to England and France. I would go to France about three times a year. A group of us would go over and buy a container full of art and artifacts and furniture to ship back. And France was always a good marketplace because things were brought in from all over the world there.

For instance, I'd see things that were Italian or Spanish all over Europe. And then you would see other countries as well represented in France because they were very much a collector mentality there.

We'd bring pieces in and mix them with simple, clean lines to do a nice, warm mix. Again, it's about warmth.

JE: Did you always know when you spotted something, "I know I can use that"? Or buying trips could be a gamble, you didn't know? Or...

DC: It could definitely be a gamble and there's a few things that I've owned for many, many years.

JE: Ha-ha-ha.

DC: That add character to the studio here. Ha-ha-ha.

JE: Ha-ha-ha. Yeah, but it helped you enjoy these countries too on top of all that.

DC: Absolutely. Absolutely, yeah, I've been very, very blessed, it's been some wonderful, wonderful trips.

JE: Some of your clients go with you?

DC: Yes, sometimes clients would go and we would find just the perfect pieces, and they loved that because they had that memory of the trip and the search that it took to find just exactly the right piece.

JE: I've often wondered, you're working with somebody to design their interior and they're over here on this page and you're over here on this page. You either through diplomacy bring them closer to you or you have to come to them. That's a delicate thing, isn't it?

DC: It is, ultimately, the client has to live with the end product whether it's residential or commercial or whatever it is. I mean, ultimately it's their expenditure and it's their environment that they're going to be occupying. But generally what I found was most people that came to us and asked for our services knew the sort of thing that we did, and also had a vision. They came to us because they were looking for art advice and counsel.

JE: Right. They knew they didn't know as much as you do.

DC: Ha-ha-ha.

Chapter 11 - 3:25

Skelly Mansion

John Erling: You mentioned historic work, were there some name houses in Tulsa that you worked on?

Doug Campbell: Well, one of the projects that I'm very, very proud of I spent three years, believe it or not, working on the renovation of the Skelly Mansion. Uh, a young couple bought it and their instructions to me was, "We want to go out of here feet first." But they

wanted the house to be rewired, re-plumbed, we took every piece of plaster off the walls to insulate the walls because it wasn't insulated when it was built initially.

The windows were all replaced with new windows that looked exactly like the old ones but they were thermally protected. When the couple bought the house it had storm windows on it, which was very detrimental to the appearance of the house. It had also been painted and the floors had been refinished so many times that we actually had to replace some of the floors. We matched exactly what was there but the floors had to be replaced. Moldings were in such bad condition that we duplicated what was there and replaced it.

So basically, it started certainly from the two by sixes and it was a brand new house. Also they had children and they wanted to open up some of the rooms and make it flow a little bit more for modern living because, obviously, when the Skellys lived there it was lots of servants and very much a different style of living than we have today. So it was opened up.

JE: W. G. Skelly, as we know him, William Skelly, the famous oilman, did he have a huge social dining area?

DC: Yes. I would call it a banquet hall, actually, I think would have held forty people for dinner. There was a small dining room on the front of the house that was original, but it would maybe seat eight people for dinner. That wasn't nearly enough because they did a lot of entertaining. So they did eventually expand at the back of the house and put a big room, which obviously became a perfect room for the "family room," for this young couple and their children.

JE: Skelly Mansion, do you recall when it was built?

DC: Uh, initially started, I think, in 1919.

JE: A house of that magnitude was not that unusual because oil people were building those kind of houses.

DC: That is correct.

JE: There was a basement to that house?

DC: Yes.

JE: So there was three floors to it: basement, middle, and upstairs.

DC: And the attic was a very grand room also that was referred to as the "ballroom."

JE: Oh, so that was a big area?

DC: Yes.

JE: So he—

DC: Although it was kind of a challenge to get up there because you had to climb the staircase.

JE: Elevators weren't part of this at all.

DC: Right, right. So the house was rebuilt from the inside and opened up for modern living.

The interesting thing is the house originally, Mrs. Skelly when Mr. Skelly passed away she

gave the house to the University of Tulsa. They owned it for a couple of years and then decided they didn't have any use for it so they sold it.

It had several different owners over the years. And then when this couple that renovated it got into a situation where they needed to sell it they sold it to the University of Tulsa. So TU now owns it again. I think the vision was for entertaining and for perhaps a presidential residence eventually.

JE: But it came back to them in far better shape and condition than when they first owned it.

DC: Yes, absolutely.

JE: And that was all under your direction?

DC: Right.

Chapter 12 - 3:00

Philbrook

John Erling: Were there other—

Doug Campbell: Well, another one I'm very proud of is in 1989, 1990, the Bill of Philbrook, the Philbrook Museum of Art was renovated and I was involved very heavily in that process. That was fun doing the research and also knowing it was changed from a residence, obviously, to a museum and there's different requirements.

We had to make some handicap accessible situations and how do you do that in an historic residence? So anyways, it was an interesting project.

I was involved in the McBirney Mansion when it converted from a private residence to a law office. That was an interesting process, of course, now it's evolved back to a private residence, but at that time it was a law office.

JE: You—

DC: One of my favorite projects though, there's a family lodge outside of Bradford, Pennsylvania, in a valley. You know, the oil industry started in Pennsylvania, and this family had this wonderful, wonderful log house or lodge, actually, that then had about twenty-three or twenty-four family cottages that were built around it. And it's a beautiful, beautiful valley.

The family over the years had dissipated all over the country and so eventually they thought the best use of it would be to convert it to a hotel operation.

Anyway, I got to work on that for many years and that was a lot of fun. We did a lot of wonderful projects up in Bradford.

JE: What do you think was the key project for you in historic work? Because something then spun off to all these other places that Doug Campbell knows what he's doing. Was there a certain project that kicked that off?

DC: Well, I think Bill of Philbrook was certainly a part of that.

JE: When you say renovating, kind of what—

DC: Well, for instance, there was a new addition put on the rotunda and a new exhibition hall and a new gift shop and educational space, the library and so forth were built in 1989, 1990. It changed the function. For instance, what had been the museum shop, which was the original kitchen in Bill of Philbrook became a gallery. So we had to design that and so forth, so it's a change in function in many cases because of the incorporation into the new wing.

JE: And here is a structure that you were so taken with when you were six years old.

DC: Six, seven, yeah.

JE: And then be able to come back and do the work you did in that house.

DC: Exactly, exactly.

JE: It had to be quite a thrill for you.

DC: I will say, Myrna was extremely involved in it. We lived down the street from Philbrook so we were there all the time. And Myrna, my former wife, was president of the volunteer organization. She was president of the docents so she was extremely involved.

And then finally they said, "You know, you're here all the time, why don't we just put you on as event planner?" So she became the event planner at Philbrook.

JE: She had been a teacher, hadn't she?

DC: Yes.

Chapter 13 - 2:30

Board Membership

John Erling: We're talking about these other homes. What kind of houses did you and Myrna lived in?

Doug Campbell: We never owned a house built after 1927, historic properties.

JE: You ought to be proud of that because you were able to preserve those properties.

DC: Right. Preserve them and enhance them, and certainly make them useable for modern living.

JE: I'm sure many people came to see the house that Doug Campbell lives in. He's an interior designer. What did he design for himself? So there's a lot of—

DC: A lot, a lot of pressure. A lot of pressure.

JE: Ha-ha-ha-ha. A lot of curiosity there?

DC: Yeah, absolutely.

JE: But you obviously were so confident in what you were doing and all that you didn't feel that pressure at all.

DC: Or naïve, depending on how you look at it.

JE: Yeah, well, I can say personally, I've been to your home with the swimming pool. I forget that address where that was located.

DC: Right.

JE: That was when your children were young.

DC: Sunset Terrace, yes.

JE: Right. And you and Myrna entertained a lot there?

DC: Yes we did.

JE: I recall Myrna playing the piano but I didn't know that you were a piano player. Could you have sat down—

DC: I never, I never once sat down at that piano. It just didn't happen, so...

JE: Ha-ha-ha.

DC: Didn't go there.

JE: We talk about this life with Philbrook as a child and renovation, then you also became a board member at Philbrook.

DC: Yes, but prior to that though I'd been a member at Gilcrease for many, many, many years, since, I think, 2004. Very, very, very involved in that extraordinary collection and actually been involved in some of the renovation on the Gilcrease house too, to make it live up to ADA standards and American Disabilities Act standards and providing restrooms and that sort of thing to meet their criteria.

But anyway, been involved in lots of projects out there over the years.

JE: So you're really a designer/architect?

DC: No I'm not an architect, but I do get involved in, shall we say, architectural decisions.

JE: Well, let's call you an architect, I know you weren't trained but certainly through your work—

DC: I'm not licensed is what—

JE: Right, but you did a lot of architectural work.

DC: Yes, yes.

JE: There's no question about that. Is that natural for interior designers to do?

DC: I'd say some people approach it as interior decoration and then there's others that approach it as interior architecture and interior design. From an architectural standpoint, which is what I tried to do.

JE: You are still today in 2016, on the board at Gilcrease?

DC: I'm at Philbrook.

JE: And at Philbrook.

DC: Philbrook board and at 108 Contemporary too, which is an art gallery down across from Guthrie Green.

Chapter 14 - 2:45
Business Was Good

John Erling: You know, when you were so much with Philbrook I know you didn't do it for that, but you were right in the mix of all that. It had to be really great for your business.

Doug Campbell: It was good. I've had a very busy career. I've been very, very blessed with wonderful, supportive clients.

JE: Was there never a dip, a lull where you wondered, "Am I going to survive?"

DC: Actually not really, I just kept busy.

JE: So the economy didn't affect your business?

DC: I didn't find it to be a huge, huge issue. It's kind of interesting that there was always something going on.

JE: You never had to wonder if you're going to meet payroll or anything?

DC: No, no.

JE: That's amazing, isn't it?

DC: I've been very blessed, without a question. Very grateful for—

JE: Well, can we say you were very talented?

DC: Well, that would be nice.

JE: I can say that.

DC: Okay, well thank you.

JE: I can say that. You were very talented.

DC: Thank you, thank you, John, I appreciate that.

JE: Is there more on that part of your life that you would like to comment on?

DC: Well, I was very involved in the very, very beginning of the American Society of Interior Designers. I served on the national board as well as state president in the late '70s. So I've been very involved over the years, especially in these national organizations that teach interior design qualification. Again, differentiating someone who is a hobbyist and someone who is professionally trained and approaches interior design from a professional manner. So I'm very much a big believer in that.

JE: So nationally you were on?

DC: The ASID, American Society of Interior Designers, I was on their board and as of this date president of the local chapter.

Another thing I enjoyed was working on Southern Hills Country Club clubhouse for almost twenty years, doing various projects over the years. And that was always enjoyable and fun.

JE: So you'd do a project and then come back and do another one? There was always something to redo.

DC: Right, it was always evolving, something to redo and so forth.

JE: For twenty years you worked for something out at Southern Hills?

DC: That's right, right. So that was a nice continuing project.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

DC: And there's been lots of other wonderful, wonderful residences. And sometimes I'd do a house for one resident and for some reason they would move to another location and I'd come back in and work on it for the next owner or two. So it's been kind of fun.

JE: And I'm sure many of them you met because of your work, but then you became friends with them too, is that true?

DC: Yes, yes.

JE: Lifelong friends that you have today that came out of that.

DC: Right.

JE: So that's not money, that's just added value, as we say.

DC: Exactly, exactly. Our lives become intertwined. An interior designer gets to know a lot about people because we're dealing with everyday living and it can be a very tight relationship.

JE: Could you have used a degree in psychology as well?

DC: Oh, I think I have an honorary one.

JE: Ha-ha-ha-ha.

DC: Definitely, definitely.

Chapter 15 - 8:35

Sexual Identity

John Erling: Part of your life is this of sexual identity.

Doug Campbell: Right.

JE: When did you realize there was a struggle going on?

DC: Well, I knew from a very young age that I had issues, but I was taught, again, principles of the church that that was just something "it was a choice." And I needed to choose "the right decision," and that was to be heterosexual.

JE: You say young age, give us an age.

DC: Oh, I think I felt attraction, you know, when I was ten.

JE: Ten years old?

DC: Yes.

JE: But you knew what the church was teaching about it?

DC: Right.

JE: Was it your mother talking about it?

DC: My mother and occasionally it would come up, but it was brought up from time to time that that wasn't acceptable.

JE: There was a conflict inside then?

DC: Yes.

JE: How were you dealing with that?

DC: I just put it away. When I met Myrna, I love Myrna, she's a wonderful, wonderful human being and I just decided to not deal with it.

JE: So you were able to ignore it?

DC: And in the '60s it was just something that was not dealt with particularly in this part of the world.

JE: So—

DC: I mean, there were people that did but I chose a different path.

JE: Right.

DC: And in many respects I'm very, very, very glad that I did because I have two wonderful sons and four wonderful granddaughters. I'm very blessed from that standpoint.

JE: Your mother, do you think she sensed anything of your struggle?

DC: [Sigh] I'm not sure that she did. It was interesting though when I decided to come out, which was in the year 2000. My mother was severely in dementia so I didn't even talk to her about it because she wouldn't have known what I was talking about.

But I went and talked to my father about it and he said, "You know, Doug, I never understood why the church said it was a choice. Why would anyone choose to be a minority?"

And I said, "Thank you, Dad. It was a huge, huge gift."

JE: Prior to that, could you go for a long time and not even think about being gay? Because you lived a life, you were married, you had children and all that. Was this always nagging on you?

DC: It wasn't really nagging, it was something I was cognizant of, but it's just something I chose not to deal with.

JE: There are those in the church or whatever who might say, "If you have enough faith you'll faith yourself straight," I guess?

DC: Right, right.

JE: Did you hear that kind of logic?

DC: Yeah, that was part of the logic at the time. I think that's changing dramatically today. And as I said, it was a very conservative upbringing also.

JE: When did you allow being gay to come more to the forefront of your thinking?

DC: In the year 2000, I went to a seminar. One of the big topics of discussion at the seminar was living with integrity. And I was just sitting there going, "I can't really talk about this

much because I'm not living in integrity." You know, I was living a life that wasn't who I was. That's when I made the decision it was time to explore that side of my existence.

JE: And you'd never explored that before?

DC: Not openly, no. No, I mean, not in an open way.

JE: Right. Did Myrna ever question you?

DC: No. Not really, no.

JE: When did you decide, "I'm going home to tell Myrna?"

DC: In the year 2000.

JE: So it was at that meeting talking about integrity you said, "No, I'm not really being honest"?

DC: I'm not living in integrity, I'm not being an honest person.

JE: How old were you then?

DC: I was fifty-three.

JE: Fifty-three years old. So you came home to her. Was she completely surprised?

DC: She seemed to be very surprised. I will say that I had met some people in chat rooms and one of them, literally, was an American who lived in Athens, Greece, and he was going to be in San Francisco. And he had gone through the exact same journey that I had gone through.

So I thought, "I'll just go out to San Francisco and meet him and we'll talk, talk, talk." So anyway, he had given me a lot of readings to do, a lot of, again, living on the subject of integrity. I went out and met David and learned a lot from him.

Myrna knew why I'd gone out to San Francisco when I came home, which I remember she came out to the car and says, "Is it over?"

And I said, "Yes."

JE: Meaning, is the marriage over?

DC: Yes, yes, our relationship.

JE: Were you nervous coming back and having to tell her that?

DC: No, it was important to live with integrity, so it was time.

JE: Then you started coming out to your friends.

DC: Yes.

JE: Was that just kind of matter of fact for you? Or was that an emotional trip?

DC: It was just more matter of fact, I mean, "This is what it is and that's who I am and that's the way I was born and—"

JE: Well—

DC: I needed to live the rest of my life.

JE: And I can say, you came out to Margaret, my wife, and I. You called and said, "I'd like to go to dinner." We didn't know what it was.

DC: Right.

JE: And it was at that dinner you very matter of factly said, "This is who I really am."

DC: Right.

JE: You had to do that to a lot of people, didn't you?

DC: A lot of people. And then, of course, word spreads, you know, people don't do a very good job of keeping secrets so it—

JE: But you didn't want it to be secret.

DC: No, I didn't want it to be secret, that was fine. I wanted to tell as many people as I could face-to-face, but it was also something that I was prepared for.

JE: Did you have any backlash, business-wise?

DC: No, in fact, I had felt very, very blessed to be in a position that I'm in. No one has ever said to my face anything negative. I've never had any kind of backlash that I'm aware of.

JE: That's business. How about friends, a backlash from friends?

DC: Absolutely.

JE: Did you lose a friend?

DC: I lost a friend or two, but I viewed it as more their problem than my problem.

JE: In time then, for Myrna, you officially had a divorce?

DC: Right.

JE: But you two have remained friends.

DC: Yes. She now lives in Georgia, and when we go to visit my son and his family there, she lives in the same town and we stay at her house.

JE: The partners you've had, she's actually become friends with them.

DC: Yes, very much so.

JE: This seems to be unusual, but maybe not.

DC: Well, I think it has to do with her character and our sons and their wives are totally, totally accepting. And my granddaughters love, loved, loved, loved my partner, so it's been a good journey.

JE: As people listen to this and either they are gay and have come out or question whether they should or whatever, what advice can you give to them?

DC: Life is very short and it's important to live with integrity. I think that at the end of the day our Creator wants us to do. And I think it's important that we live our life with integrity.

JE: We hear so many young people who commit suicide because of it.

DC: Right.

JE: Or they come out to their parents and they're rejected. Some of them can't do much because they're living in their house and they're afraid to admit it.

DC: Right.

JE: You didn't have that struggle because you were able to put it away.

DC: I put it away for many, many years, to say the least. And as I said, I've had an extraordinarily wonderful life and I don't have any regrets. I've been very, very blessed.

So, you know, it is what it is and I'm so extremely grateful, extremely grateful for the life I've been given.

JE: John, that I've known, was he your first partner then?

DC: He was my first serious partner. It was interesting, a very, very, very dear friend of mine who lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, called me one day and she said, "I've met him."

And I said, "You've met who?"

She said, "The one for you."

And I said, "Okay. Whatever."

So the next time I was in Santa Fe she had a dinner party and John was invited. All of a sudden, the rest of the guests disappeared and just left he and I talking on the sofa. We hit it off immediately.

JE: And how long were you two together?

DC: John and I met in 2007. We went back and forth between Santa Fe and Tulsa until 2009. In 2009, I had a serious medical issue while I was in Santa Fe and had to be transported to Denver, and he was just extraordinarily supportive all through that process.

I came back to Tulsa for rehab and then the following July of 2009, he moved to Tulsa.

Chapter 16 - 8:00

John and ALS

John Erling: He was so supportive of you, but then you were very supportive of him. Tell us the story.

Doug Campbell: Well, John got a masters degree in social welfare from the University of California, Berkeley, so he was a very smart guy. He was also fascinated by his personal training, so he was in great shape. He was very, very, very active.

And then in November of 2010, he noticed that he was getting weaker. You know, he'd go out running with neighbors and he all of a sudden got to the point that he couldn't run any longer. And he thought, because of his training and so forth, that it was a spine issue. So it got progressively worse.

And then finally, had an appointment with a neurosurgeon and meeting with a neurologist and was diagnosed with ALS in August of 2011.

JE: This was devastating to both of you.

DC: It was as though someone had taken a two by four and whacked us in the head.

JE: What were some of his symptoms?

DC: Basically his was limb onset, so it was mainly in his legs. He just lost the use of his legs like he'd previously been able to use. And then it started working its way into his arms as well.

JE: And then finally into his lungs?

DC: And then finally into his lungs, yes.

JE: We should say, of course, it's also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. Lou Gehrig played for the Yankees baseball team. He had a record of most consecutive games played, 2,130. Took himself out of the lineup May 2 of 1939, because of symptoms of ALS. And he retired at thirty-six and was the cause of his death two years later.

DC: Right.

JE: About ALS, talk to us about what it is.

DC: Well, basically, your brain stayed intact and flourishing, but the connection between the brain and the nerves that go in fire muscles, if you will, become problematic. There's a disconnect there that occurs. ALS strikes in many, many, many different ways. I've known people that have limb onset, which is what John has and what I have, in which you start maybe tripping or you start dragging your feet. Then all of a sudden, one of your arms maybe you can't grip, you don't have any strength left in your arm, that sort of thing.

Then there's also what is called the bulbar onset, which affects your lungs and your breathing as a result and also your swallowing and your functions from the neck down. So it affects many, many, many different ways.

JE: The cause is not really known in most cases, is that—

DC: That it is not. They say about 10 percent of the cases that are diagnosed are from family, you know, gene connections. But other than that they don't really know, at this point, what causes ALS.

JE: And to find out if it is ALS, don't they do testing for everything else?

DC: A lot of times it becomes ALS is the only thing left. They've ruled out everything else, Parkinson's, AMS, you know, or whatever, and ALS is a difficult disease to diagnose.

JE: So from 2010, when he was feeling the symptoms, how long then before he died?

DC: He died at the end of February, 2013.

JE: So two and a half years.

DC: Yeah.

JE: And you were his caregiver?

DC: Yes. Yes, we had two and three ladies that would come in the morning, prepare him for the day and be there through the day. I would then come home in the early evening and then another wonderful angel came and took care of him in the evening. And I was there during the night, so if he needed something like—one of the big problems with ALS is saliva collects in your throat and you don't have the strength or the energy to swallow. So it has to be suctioned out. So that I would have to get up during the night sometimes and do that.

JE: Will it always journey to the lungs, no matter where it comes on?

DC: Yeah, eventually, yes.

JE: Now some will start immediately in the lungs.

DC: Yes.

JE: And their life is not as long.

DC: Usually that's the case. Now you can have a tracheotomy done and that will prolong. It's like Stephen Hawking, you know, the British physicist who was diagnosed fifty years ago with ALS, but he has twenty-four/seven care and he also has a tracheotomy. And with that you can, you know, live pretty much indefinitely. But he's in a power chair and has to be cared for constantly.

JE: There are many diseases that can be called cruel but this is, I'm sure, thinking has got to be one of the most cruel.

DC: In my opinion yes, because your brain is not affected. You're still very aware of what's going on around you, it's just your body quits working.

JE: Did you have computer equipment for John so he could communicate?

DC: Yes, we had an IGATE's computer so simply by moving the pupils in his eyes he could type, if you will, on a screen. So he was able to communicate. It took a long time to be able to type out something. There was a button he could look at, he could just change his gaze of his eyes over to the Speak button and the computer would speak for him.

JE: When you think about his will to live, when you looked at John how can you continue on?

DC: John had made the comment, he got to the point where he needed a feeding tube, in other words, no longer could swallow things through his throat so he had to have a feeding tube inserted into his intestinal tract. He said at that point, "If you can't eat, what's the point of going on?"

But the nurses talked him into, "You need this for medications and you don't want to die of dehydration so you need a way to get fluids into your body and medications to ease pains or for other issues."

He agreed to that but I know that always psychologically bothered him that he could no longer eat.

JE: Well, it's hard to imagine there are those who, perhaps, have accidents affecting their spine and they get frozen. And he's basically then frozen right there.

DC: Right, that's correct.

JE: He could just move his eyes.

DC: Right.

JE: And how long a day had to be for him.

DC: Right.

JE: And what were the nights like?

DC: Well, he was able to sleep at night until his throat would fill up and had to be suctioned. But it's pretty sad, a pretty sad life.

JE: So then what eventually took him?

DC: It was interesting, he always hoped and prayed for a cure, therefore, he was hesitant to have hospice come into the house. And finally, he agreed to have the hospice nurses, and I must admit that's an incredible service and a wonderful, wonderful organization and compassionate and caring people.

One of them one day said to me, "He'll be gone within a few weeks." He said, "His internal organs are shutting down." And of course, that's what they're trained to know. I wouldn't have had a clue but they said, "He'll be gone in two weeks," and sure enough, within a week he didn't wake up one morning.

JE: Then in addition to hospice you had a great circle of friends that helped you, didn't they?

DC: Yes, yes, yes.

JE: They came every day, some of them.

DC: Yeah, in fact, the night before he died, one of my friends and his daughters who are eight and nine years old came over and entertained him because I had a board meeting I needed to attend. And so I went to that and they came over and it was wonderful the number of people.

JE: So then he died what day?

DC: February 27, 2013.

JE: This took a big toll on you too because the caregiver also is affected by this.

DC: Absolutely. In some respects, it was a blessing that he was gone because he was so unhappy with being in that condition. So in a way, it was a relief. And he had sent me an email, he was able with his IGATE computer to send me emails, and he had sent me an email about three weeks before. And he said, "I'm ready to go." And he said, "What's the point of living in this condition?"

Chapter 17 - 10:55

Doug and ALS

John Erling: Then as we move on, you met Wes.

Doug Campbell: After John's passing, about nine months later, I was at an event and John pointed at Wes and said, "This guy will take care of you, get to know him." John was already deceased, but he was pointing him out to me, as a spirit.

JE: Okay, after he died you could sense John telling you, "That man over there will take care of you"?

DC: Yes, yes.

JE: What did you do then? Did you go over and talk to him?

DC: Well, we talked and then a mutual friend happened to invite us to go see a play together. We started talking and, you know.

JE: Was this in Tulsa?

DC: Yes. Well, he was actually living in Tahlequah at the time.

JE: And what his profession?

DC: He worked at the School of Optometry for Northeastern State University.

JE: Did he do some ministerial work?

DC: Yes as a lay Presbyterian minister. And has a church that he's been involved in for many years, in Park Hill, Oklahoma, which is near Tahlequah.

JE: How long after you and Wes got together that one day something strange seemed to feel funny to you?

DC: Well, it was oddly again in November of 2013. I started feeling my foot dragging, my left foot dragging. I thought, "I'd better go get this checked out." So I went to see a neurologist that I'd dealt with for years.

He said, "Well, I'd like for you to go see a neurosurgeon."

So I saw him and I was having fasciculations too, which were muscle twitches all over the body, which is one of the symptoms of ALS. I knew something was up and I could tell that's what they were thinking, but they didn't want to diagnose me because I'd also had peripheral neuropathy in my feet for about ten years, at that point. And they said it was kind of unusual to have both conditions.

JE: Were you diabetic?

DC: No.

JE: Neuropathy normally is associated with that.

DC: Well—

JE: And you had it and you weren't diabetic?

DC: I wasn't diabetic, so Dr. Dunaway, my chief neurologist, said, "I think you need to go to Dr. Alan Pestronk at Washington University in St. Louis because he's the top neurologist, in my opinion, in the country."

So I called January 1 after they got back from their Christmas break. And they said, "Well, the first appointment he has available is April the 7th."

I went, "Uh, I have to wait, you know, that long to even get into see him."

There's an MDA/ALS clinic in Oklahoma City, Dr. Beson. And I went over and saw him. He said, "Your case is really complicated and I'm glad you've got an appointment with Dr. Pestronk because it's complicated."

He had been John's ALS doctor so we knew each other already. And it just was very, very exacerbating to have to wait that long to go to St. Louis. We did go then on to that

and it was a seven-and-a-half-hour appointment and it was test after test after test. They took twenty-four vials of blood, I mean, it was just electric, where they run electric shocks down your arms and legs and did every test you can imagine to make sure what the diagnosis would be.

And they came back a couple of weeks later and said, "We're 92 percent sure it's ALS."

JE: How did they tell you that?

DC: They called me.

JE: The diagnosis was on the phone, on a phone call?

DC: Yes.

JE: You were 92 percent?

DC: Right.

JE: Well, that's the same as saying a hundred, isn't it?

DC: Well, no, there's 8 percent there, John. I held out for, you know, maybe, maybe, maybe.

Then they wanted me to come back and I did a follow-up exam in July and then they included 100 percent.

JE: Let me take you back to when you first noticed your left leg. Did you think, "Oh, no, this could be ALS"?

DC: When I started feeling the muscle twitching, that's when I put the two together and went, "Oh, no."

JE: How scary that had to be.

DC: Yeah, it was. And particularly, ALS is a rare disease to start with and to have two people from the same household to have a disease that they don't really know what causes it, it was astounding.

It was interesting, my daughter-in-law, who does a lot of healthcare at work in New York City, started researching articles on the rarity of two people that are not related in the same household having ALS. And she said, "The best article I found was published by the Mayo School of Medicine in 2011, and it was written by a Tulsa neurologist—"

JE: Oh.

DC: ...John DeWitt." And I said, "Well, not only do I know John DeWitt but I have an appointment with him this afternoon because I'm working on his residence."

So I went over to talk to John and he says, "Off the charts rare." He said, "I did the research and wrote the article because I had a couple here in Tulsa that were diagnosed six years apart that weren't genetically related, a husband and wife."

JE: We're talking 1, 2 percent probably.

DC: It's incredibly rare that that would happen. There's about fifty-five hundred cases diagnosed in the United States every year out of three hundred million. It's a very, very small percentage of the population.

JE: Affecting certain ages?

DC: Stephen Hawking was twenty-one when he was diagnosed. I know a gentleman here in Tulsa that was diagnosed at thirty and he passed when he was thirty-three with small children. Then I know people that are diagnosed in their seventies as well. So it's all over the age range.

JE: So how old were you when you were diagnosed?

DC: Uh, sixty-five.

JE: Sixty-five years old. How has it progressed? It's slowly affecting more than just your left leg?

DC: Yes. It started with my left leg. I fell on numerous times, it just caught me off guard and I'd have falls as I was walking down Lexington Avenue in New York City and 47th Street. I was too busy looking at people and buildings and missed a crack in the pavement and fell flat on my face, right in the middle of New York.

Then I noticed within the last three or four months my right leg was becoming affected so I had to quit driving because we use our right leg, you know, for driving, so I had to quit driving, relying on the kindness of friends. And I do have someone now who is helping me with that.

It's also affected my left arm, it's much, much weaker than it used to be. And typing is an issue. I can point a finger on my left hand but that's really all, so I use my right hand and point with my left hand to try to type on a keyboard.

JE: So when you see this progression how do you handle that?

DC: One of my favorite quotes is Abraham Lincoln's quote, "People are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." I'm extremely grateful for a wonderful, wonderful life and I'm extremely appreciative of friends and colleagues and I just have made my mind up that I'm going to be happy and be grateful. So if it progresses it progresses, it will be what it will be.

JE: The natural question is ask about depression. Do you get depressed?

DC: No, no, I haven't had that issue.

JE: Never get in a funk, as we say?

DC: I just haven't had that experience because I just choose to be happy.

JE: Since you were with John through this journey of ALS and now you have it, what did you learn from watching him?

DC: Well, I learned that it does require caregiving constantly. For instance, at this point I can sit in a chair but I can't get up from one. So I have to have someone who has some upper body strength and knows technique on how to lift me.

Wes, for instance, has learned how to lift me out of a chair. Even such things as rolling over in bed, I don't have the muscle strength to do that, so I have to be pushed and pulled

and just simple things of that nature. I have to have someone with me twenty-four/seven. If, for instance, he needs to go to take care of something or be gone for four or five hours that's no problem. I just sit in the chair during the time. Or a friend comes over, you know, there's ways of handling that.

But there's a point where I'm going to have to get up and use the restroom or whatever. I use the urinal most of the time, at this point, obviously. And we have equipped the townhouse with handicap rails and all kinds of equipment.

JE: Have you ever thought, "I lived watching John and then I was zapped with the very same thing. And with all that knowledge I have it"? How cruel that seemed to have been.

DC: It's unusual, it's very rare that this happens but I'm not the first case, certainly, but, again, John, I just choose to be happy. I choose to make the most of it and just celebrate every day of my life. Whatever I have left I want to celebrate.

JE: About Wes, everybody who meets him, he's such an engaging, nice personality, and lots of warmth. We see that in him immediately. He has been a tremendous help for you.

DC: Without question. Without question. You know, I tell him this constantly, "I don't know what I'd do without ya." Because he's the way I get out of bed and get into bed and get out of a chair and get up and do anything.

JE: For those who don't have a partner like that or are by themselves they have to hire twenty-four hour help.

DC: Exactly.

JE: He's nearly that, isn't he?

DC: Yes. Plus I do have a caregiver during the day, Monday through Friday.

JE: A party was held for you at Phibrook.

DC: Yes.

JE: Talk about that.

DC: One of my dear clients and friends said, "I want to host a party."

And I said, "Okay."

Anyway, basically, she sent out extraordinary invitations and we had 350 people that responded positively. And I had people from Denver, from St. Louis, various cities. And my sons came in from New York and Georgia for the party.

JE: And I was in attendance there.

DC: You were the master of ceremonies, John.

JE: You selected me and I was very honored that you did that. Many people spoke to you privately, but then there were those who got up on stage and talked to you. It had to be so meaningful for you.

DC: Absolutely. I knew that I couldn't speak because I couldn't emotionally handle that. Lots of tears shed that evening.

JE: And most of us couldn't gather three hundred people together about ourselves, but you did, and all of us will remember that party for the rest of our lives.

DC: Well, thank you. Thank you. I was very honored, to say the least.

JE: It was quite a spread and it should have been there because of what you did and meant for Philbrook.

DC: It was a great honor, to say the least.

Chapter 18 - 5:50

The Next Life

John Erling: You grew up in a Baptist church.

Doug Campbell: Yes.

JE: What is that faith or any faith doing for you now?

DC: I have had an interesting transformation. I won't get into a lot of details, but I was visiting the Luberon Valley in Provence, in the south of France. And I kept going, "I've been here before," but I hadn't, in this life anyway, been there before. But it was almost like I didn't need a map, I knew where all these villages and towns were. Everything seemed very, very, very familiar. I was just amazed at that experience.

A couple of years later, a friend insisted I go see an intuitionist that was in town advising one of our business leaders here in town. I thought, "Oh, well, whatever."

So I went to see this person. I walk in the door, she doesn't know anything about me, and she said, "Well, you're an easy read." She said, "You lived in Roman times. You lived in the south of France," in the same valley she described to a tee, the valley. And actually told me about my life.

And, again, we had rented a house in Provence and the bridge at the end of the driveway was built in 3 BC, and it was about twenty miles from Aro, which has the most intact Roman arena in the world. She telling me in this life I was female and my husband, we were vintners, which again, the house was surrounded by grapevines, Aro being twenty miles away, my husband could easily get to do his gladiators thing on the weekends, if you will.

So when she described this it all came back to, "There's nothing to be afraid of." I was kind of taught a lot of fear growing up, and I went, "Okay," there was just something inside me that says, "This is the cycle of life and there's nothing to fear. That my time on earth will be rewarded with another life. Therefore, there's really no fear at all."

And that's why I don't get depressed. When it's my time to go I will miss not seeing my granddaughters grow up, I will regret that very much, but it is what it is. So it's the hand I've been dealt.

JE: So then you're probably wondering, "Well, what's my next life going to be?"

DC: Right. Just how exciting, it's kind of exciting to think about.

JE: Is that really your deep down feeling? You are being honest about that?

DC: Yes, absolutely. At this point in my life I'm not into dogma. I am into concepts. And this, of course, is a Buddhist concept. I'm not into the Buddhist dogma at all, but I do appreciate their concept of the cycle of life repeating.

JE: I think you told me that as you were growing up you questioned your mother a lot about the faith, protestant faith, we'll call it, happening to be Baptist.

DC: Yes.

JE: You were even questioning back then, ten years old?

DC: Well, one of the things, we were studying the origins of the Bible and I realized that, you know, a lot of the Bible, the New Testament, wasn't put together until the fifth century when it was decided what to include. And I remember asking my mother, "How can they know what someone actually said five centuries before when there were no computers and even things weren't written down until many, many years later?" I said, "How can we know what they said?"

And her response to me was, "You just have to have faith. You just have to have faith."

And I always thought, "I need more than—I need something else other than that."

JE: So that was an early thought?

DC: I remembered questioning her when I was like in second or third grade.

JE: So ALS has progressed. You're sitting here with this interview now in a wheelchair. Has it been rather recent that you decided the wheelchair is for you?

DC: It's safer, it feels much, much safer. And the physical therapist suggested it, it's time.

JE: So you're wondering about how long your life is going to be. Nobody has set a cap on that, I'm sure.

DC: Because people can go into a plateau and stay or they can go very quickly. There's no way of knowing with ALS.

JE: You could have ten years at this.

DC: I could have ten years, I could have ten months, you just don't know.

JE: Do you live with that everyday thinking?

DC: Yes. It encourages me to clean out file cabinets. Clean out the garage and throw stuff away. Or give things away. Trust me, you ought to see the stack of things that need to go to the shredder, it's incredible. I'm trying to get things simplified for my heirs.

JE: You know, you will be remembered for your great work in town, but particularly for the

way you're handling this. Accepting with courage, you don't seem to be complaining, you don't say, "Why me? Woe is me."

DC: I don't have that feeling, John, I'm just grateful for the wonderful, wonderful life I've been given. And I'm extremely grateful for that.

JE: You seem to be graciously handling all this.

DC: Well, I appreciate that, thank you.

JE: And we will remember you that way.

DC: Thank you.

JE: How would you like us to remember you?

DC: As someone who is grateful and appreciative of a wonderful, wonderful life. That's all I can ask for.

JE: Well, I sit here in wonder. I've known you for a number of years and the way you're handling this, maybe that'll be your legacy.

DC: Yeah.

JE: Which you have many things to be proud of. Thank you for telling us your story for Voices. There'll be those who will listen and draw strength from you the way you're doing this.

DC: Oh, I appreciate that. It's my honor.

JE: It's ours too, thank you, Doug.

Chapter 19 - 4:57

Follow-up - One Year Later

John Erling: Today's date is July 6, 2017. I am visiting with Doug Campbell this morning. Good morning, Doug.

Doug Campbell: Good morning, John.

JE: I'm back with you to follow up on our interview from June 23, 2016. And we are again here in the offices of Campbell Design in Tulsa. A year ago, we talked about your diagnosis of ALS and how it was affecting you then. And you're very gracious to talk about the progression of the disease.

Let's talk about your type of ALS. Are there two types?

DC: Basically, yes, limb onset and bulbar onset. The limb onset is what I was diagnosed with.

JE: To this date, how long have you been living with ALS?

DC: Two and a half years since I really became cognizant of what was going on. I was starting to fall. My left leg was starting to drag, which would cause me to trip over thresholds or steps or whatever. And that's when it began as I realized there's an issue.

JE: I was reading thirty thousand Americans are affected with this disease. And they say about five thousand new cases in the United States each year.

DC: I've heard that figure, yes.

JE: And I didn't realize that ALS strikes in midlife and men are about one and a half times more likely to have the disease as women.

DC: Well, that's been my observation as well. Although there are quite a few women I know who have been affected by it, through a local ALS support group.

JE: Yeah. I've taken the transcript from our interview a year ago and talking about your legs, you said, "Then I noticed within the last three or four months my right leg was becoming affected. So I had to quit driving because we use our right leg for driving, so I had to quit driving, relying on the kindness of friends."

Let's talk about your legs today.

DC: Well, I'm in a wheelchair, powered wheelchair, and I can't even move my legs in bed, to readjust or anything, so they're pretty much completely gone.

JE: You've commented to me about the urge to want to stretch your legs.

DC: Yes. One of the things I realized recently how much I miss walking because you stretch your legs at that time. So I do lift my legs up in the power chair and stretch them just so I have some function there, as far as reflexes and so forth.

JE: So that's a major progression in your legs.

DC: Yes.

JE: Because a year ago you were sitting at this table, and I'm not sure if you were able to get up by yourself then or not but . . .

DC: It was a struggle but, yes, I could stand, with a walker.

JE: Yeah. Then you said a year ago, "My left arm is much weaker than it used to be. And typing is an issue. I can point a finger on my left hand but that's really all, so I use my right hand and point with my left hand to try to type on a keyboard.

So describe your arms now, a year later.

DC: Well, my left arm is completely immobile and my right arm is almost that way. Really, the only function that I have is I can move my right arm some, and I can use my right thumb to hit the button on my phone, or a few minor things. But the days of keyboard activity are long gone.

JE: And it affects your eating, obviously.

DC: Yes, I have to be fed.

JE: Is that humiliating?

DC: I haven't found it to be that way. I've heard people ask if that's the case and I've thought a lot about it and no one really seems to care and if they don't, you know, I don't care. It's what it is, it's the way my life is now, which is the way it is.

I've got some wonderful caregivers that do a great job.

JE: Has this progressed faster this past year than you thought it would?

DC: Not necessarily. Progression is very interesting in ALS. I have known people who were diagnosed a year ago and are already gone. I know other people, I know personally a lady in our support group that was diagnosed fourteen years ago. She's in a wheelchair but she still has her voice, she still has her ability to eat without a feeding tube and so forth. So it progresses very differently in people. It also plateaus sometimes, you just don't know. There's not any science to this particular disease.

JE: So the two types of ALS do not necessarily determine the length of life?

DC: Bulbar you go much quicker because—

JE: ...meaning it attacks the lungs?

DC: It attacks the lungs and the throat and it seems to result in a faster progression.

Chapter 20 - 6:24

Follow-up - Caregiver

John Erling: Let's talk about your caregiver, David. Those of us that are around you frequently also have gotten to know David.

Doug Campbell: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

JE: Who is such a pleasing personality. Talk about what he does for you. He's a big guy.

DC: Right.

JE: And a very strong person.

DC: Very strong and I'm extremely blessed. David arrives in the morning and literally, physically lifts me out of bed, dresses me, brushes my teeth after he feeds me breakfast, and then gives me a shave job and applies lotions and whatever else—all the duties that have to be accomplished in the morning. I just lay there and he takes care of.

JE: Yeah. How did you get to know him?

DC: Interestingly enough, my partner's late wife ran a home health agency and David came to work for her in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, over twenty years ago. So Wes knew of him from those days, he's worked for three different ALS patients over the years. One of them had a tracheotomy, which is an artificial breathing device and lasted for a long time with that device.

And then the next gentleman that he worked for also had a breathing device and tracheotomy.

Then he wanted to come work for me and I was very honored and pleased to have him.

JE: The personalities, apparently, are working because you could have personalities that just don't get along with each other.

DC: Oh, absolutely. We laugh a lot. We tell stories all the time and just have a great time.

JE: Yeah. Well, he's a sweet person, there's no question about that.

DC: I'm very blessed.

JE: Yeah. Well, let's talk about your chair that you're in and what it can do for you now. Just kind of talk about the mechanics of it.

DC: Well, it's a Permobil wheelchair. I have a handle that I can operate it and get it up to speeds like sixteen miles an hour, if we're really wanting to go for a ride. It's an amazing device in that it can move me into any position basically I want to be in, including taking a nap. It will be almost completely horizontal. And I can adjust the seat back in a lay position very easily with the device.

I still have enough strength right now that I can mobilize the devices with my right thumb and so forth.

JE: As ALS will progress, and it could affect your ability to communicate—

DC: Yes.

JE: ...the computer, the eye contact—

DC: Right.

JE: ...for you to be able to actually type by eyesight on a computer.

DC: Right. One thing with ALS, you don't lose the ability to move your eye pupils. And the eye gaze computers will let you. You have a bar in front of your eyes that by moving your eyes you can accentuate whatever letter you want to use. And as typical technology today they'll be predicting what you're trying to say so that you can just simply hit "okay" and it will put in the word. And then once you're completed, you can either send it as an email or you can hit "speak," and in my case, I have done a program called "ModelTalker," so I've recorded thousands and thousands of words already. The machine will be speaking with my voice so I can communicate with people and they'll feel comfortable talking to me.

JE: That's pretty amazing.

DC: Yeah, it is phenomenal.

JE: The process of recording, did you say thousands of words? Do you just say the word or do you say phrases?

DC: The first session was sixteen hundred sentences. And I know that doesn't sound like that much, but trust me, it is. Basically, you have the screen that has the sentence on it. They have a voice that speaks the sentence and then you repeat the sentence as you come across each one. And the sixteen hundred sentences, so there's a lot of words in that.

JE: Oh yes. Yeah, and do-overs.

DC: Yeah.

JE: You probably know what the recording voice is all about and—

DC: Sure.

JE: ...so you probably had to do a lot of do-overs, so that took several hours, I'm sure.

DC: Oh, many hours, many days, actually. So . . .

JE: Yeah, so sixteen hundred phrases?

DC: Yes. And from that, words that weren't in the phrases they can re-create because they have all the intonations of all these various sentences and so forth. They can take that and create new sentences that weren't on the list.

JE: We have no idea when that is going to be needed.

DC: Don't have any idea yet. And that's true with breathing equipment and feeding tube— that's another thing, eventually you can't swallow, so in order to get nutrition, liquids, medications, and so forth, you have to have a feeding tube, which is inserted into your esophagus.

JE: You just think arms and legs, those of us who are learning about it don't realize it begins then to affect the throat.

DC: Yes. Yes. You just don't know when that will happen. So far, I've been blessed and that has not started yet.

JE: I was thinking when I said, "Well, we don't know when you'd have to use that voice bank," do you think about that a lot? The projection of this?

DC: You know, John, I'm living every day the best I can and celebrate each day in gratitude because I've had a wonderful, blessed life. And what comes will come when it comes. I'm just not obsessing over that at all.

JE: When you wake up, do you wonder what progressed today or will today?

DC: No, I don't really dwell on that.

JE: In fact, you said to me one time, "John, you know, I don't really think about ALS that much."

DC: I really don't. I really don't. It is what it is and my main feeling is gratitude for a wonderful life.

JE: You spoke that way a year ago. Here it has obviously affected you more and you're still saying the same things in the same way. That's pretty amazing.

DC: Well, my favorite quote of all time is attributed to Abraham Lincoln, "People are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." I should to be positive, happy, in gratitude.

Chapter 21 – 5:26**Follow-up – Finances**

John Erling: Well, I do know you're busy, busy, busy.

Doug Campbell: Right.

JE: And that helps you as well.

DC: Yes.

JE: Socially busy but you're here at work.

DC: Right.

JE: You didn't come here to the office just to do this.

DC: No.

JE: You had work to do today.

DC: We, right, we've got projects that we're working on. And the wonderful thing is the brain is not affected by ALS. The body may be but the body is not. And I have some wonderful coworkers here that help with physically doing what needs to be done. And we meet with clients who are very patient and understanding.

JE: It probably has affected your business by your mobility—

DC: Well, it's—

JE: ...need a big house or something?

DC: ...it's a challenge. For instance, going up the staircase to the second floor is not going to be possible now. Even without an elevator. I installed an elevator in my townhouse so I do have access to the second floor very easily.

A few days ago it was the fourth of July and we had friends over to watch the fireworks from our roof terra deck. Four guys carried me to the roof so I could participate.

JE: Well, you're blessed with lots of friends, aren't you?

DC: Yes, I am very blessed.

JE: As attested by the over three hundred who came to a party for you over at Philbrook.

DC: Right.

JE: Which we have talked about in the previous interview.

DC: Right.

JE: And I know you still have wonderful thoughts and memories of that. In fact, Wes put together a book commemorating the party.

DC: Yes, yes.

JE: It was wonderful.

Financially now, how does this affect, and what does insurance cover or Medicare cover?

DC: Well, Medicare covers the medical bills. It purchased this power chair and other equipment that is needed. Now that Toby computer, for instance, will be a lease situation when that comes up. Just a lease Medicare pays for. Caregiving is out of my own pocket.

JE: So no insurance policy or Medicare will cover the caregivers like David and Wes.

DC: Right.

JE: Everything else is covered.

DC: I have a co-pay, you know, that I have to pay for out of pocket, but all the doctor bills and most of the equipment are covered by Medicare.

JE: So there could be those who are unable—

DC: That's right.

JE: ...to afford a caregiver.

DC: That's very correct. A lot of ALS patients rely totally on family to be their caregivers.

JE: Yeah. And in this case, David is a professional.

DC: Yes.

JE: That makes a huge difference.

DC: Yes, without question.

JE: And he can anticipate what your next move is going to be.

DC: Exactly. He's had lots of—

JE: I'm sure that's a big part of it.

DC: ...lots of experience with ALS.

JE: I mean, he's already thought what you're going to begin to think.

DC: Yes.

JE: So that's what puts him in that professional category.

Support groups you've alluded to earlier. Talk about a support group and how important that is to you and to others.

DC: Well, in Tulsa and most communities, a lot of the communities, there's an ALS support group. In our case, we meet once a month. It's supported in Tulsa by the MDA. We sometimes have speakers but most of the time we just share. Family members come, friends come, so there can be thirty-five, forty, fifty people at these support groups and we just all talk about our experience with ALS and what we've learned. It becomes a sense of family almost.

I very much enjoy going to the meetings because I feel like I know everybody because we've all shared from the depths of our experience what's going on with us with ALS. And the caregivers that are there and the family members that are there share their feelings and so forth about what's happening. We learn sometimes about new technologies because we will have speakers that discuss various aspects of the equipment and what's being done out there.

There's not been a lot of success or research. They still don't know what causes ALS. And they also have introduced now a new medication, the first one in over twenty years for ALS. And it will delay progression for maybe a few months. It's not for everyone either; there's a limited number of people, about 30 percent of the patients will benefit from taking it. The real zinger though, it's about \$144,000 a year for the medication.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

DC: I have a feeling a lot of insurance companies aren't going to be covering that.

JE: Yeah.

DC: But we learn about all these new things.

JE: You said thirty to fifty people there, how many are actual ALS patients?

DC: I would say at the Tulsa group, probably about ten. And then a lot of them, as I said, bring large entourages of friends and family.

JE: Out of that ten, are they mostly men?

DC: No, it's about half and half.

JE: Really?

DC: Yeah, in that group.

JE: And the age?

DC: Varies all over the map. Uh, (hesitation sound).

JE: What would be the youngest, do you think?

DC: The youngest that I've personally known was thirty years old. He lasted three years. He had three small children, but he lasted, I think, three years, and passed away when he was thirty-three.

JE: So he's the youngest and who would be the oldest?

DC: Well, there's some that are in their seventies, eighties. I know the age of this youngest man because he was open about that.

JE: And so unusual.

DC: Yeah, to have three small children, it was very, very sad.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

Chapter 22 - 5:22

Follow-up - Grandchildren

John Erling: Do you think you're treated differently by people you interact with, like friends or business clients? Do they talk differently to you?

Doug Campbell: They're respectful of my limitations but I don't sense a difference in their feelings about working with me. Friends are just completely, completely loving and kind and I don't sense a change in that at all.

JE: A lot of people meeting you maybe for the first time or start talking to you, and even friends, don't know what to say. They want to be sensitive, they don't want to ask you a question, perhaps it may be uncomfortable for them. So it's almost like you're the one that has to put them at ease.

DC: That's a good point. One thing I've noticed, you know, if I'm meeting someone for the first time, ALS never comes up, it's never really discussed. They never say, "What is your ailment?" because obviously I'm in a wheelchair. Either they've already heard or they're just respectful, they're not asking too many questions. So the subject has not really come up.

JE: Well, people that are real sensitive and respectful—

DC: I agree.

JE: ...don't want to ask the probing questions that I've been asking that you've been so gracious to answer.

DC: Right.

JE: Now they can listen to—

DC: Right.

JE: ...those kind of questions that they may have had. You know, these interviews on Voices of Oklahoma can be heard around the world. So you're talking to people in Bulgaria and Israel and Poland and Great Britain, South Korea, Ireland, Spain, Denmark, I can go on, South Africa, Australia. I've often wondered why so many come in and I can only think that maybe Oklahoma has its image of cowboys and Indians or a lot of people like to just listen to English and brush up on their English.

DC: Right.

JE: Maybe. But you have an opportunity here that some listeners are affected by ALS. Either speaking to someone with ALS or a family member, what would you say to them?

DC: Be strong, be grateful for a wonderful life that they've been given, whatever that life might have been, just be grateful for that. And choose to be happy.

JE: And you know, I have that in the transcript. This is a year ago, you said here, "John, I just choose to be happy. I choose to make the most of it and just celebrate every day of my life, whatever I have left I want to celebrate." And you're saying the very same things.

DC: That's what I live by.

JE: So this was not made up back then.

DC: No, no, no that's my mantra.

JE: And you did this because I think you wanted to educate people about ALS.

DC: Right.

JE: I thank you for sharing this story. It's fascinating. More and more people are getting to know about what we call Lou Gehrig's Disease than ever before. For some reason, I don't know if it's because more people have it but there's more information out there.

DC: Well, there is. And there's the MDA, the ALS association, we're all trying to build an awareness of ALS that perhaps has been missing in the past.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

DC: There's definitely an emphasis on raising money for research because it's a disease that desperately needs a cure found for.

JE: Yeah. Well, thank you, Doug.

DC: Thank you, John.

JE: I and others who know you respect you for many, many things in your professional life. But the way you're handling this is probably beyond what most of us say we could ever do. So thank you for being an example of representing hardship. But you probably don't even look at it as hardship.

DC: Really, I don't. No, it's just something that has to be dealt with.

JE: Do you think despite this happening that if it hadn't of happened you wouldn't have met So-and-so? Or this experience would not have happened? Are there some positives that came out?

DC: There are some positives, yes. The negatives are the prospect of not getting to know my grandchildren as adults, things of that nature. But I don't dwell on that either, I'm just thrilled to have them in my life and accept their love as it for now.

JE: Let's talk about them for a moment here. There are five of them. Name the grandchildren.

DC: Well, there's Hannah and Katie, who are the two oldest. It's interesting they're like twelve days apart so they're very, very close together in age. And then there's Gracie, and she lives with her sister Hannah and they live in Scarsdale, New York. And then on Katie's side, they live in Athens, Georgia. There's Molly, who's five. And then they have a new baby brother who is five months old.

JE: And his name is?

DC: Henry. Henry Finnegan.

JE: And they all come here to visit you?

DC: Yes, they're very good about that. All of them will be here in August, I'm very excited about that.

JE: Oh, the whole gang will be here?

DC: Yeah, the whole gang.

JE: What do they call you?

DC: Well, the New Yorkers called me Aboo because we were playing hide and seek one day and I'd pop out and say, "Aboo." So that stuck. The Georgians call me Grandpa Doug.

JE: That's good. Well, it's nice we can end our time with you now with a smile and a laugh.

DC: Right.

JE: And again, thank you.

DC: Thank you.

Chapter 19 - 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. Thank you for your support as we preserve Oklahoma's legacy one voice at a time, on VoicesofOklahoma.com.