Doug Dodd

Lawyer, Broadcaster, Politician

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Announcer: Doug Dodd, a life-long Tulsan, was a television news reporter and documentary producer for KOTV and KTUL-TV before graduating from law school, and is one of a very few Tulsa attorneys who regularly represents national and local magazines, newspapers, and television stations, and media companies with an emphasis on First Amendment and defamation issues.

Doug served on the Tulsa Public Schools Board of Education for 11 years and was a candidate for Oklahoma's First Congressional District seat in 2002 and 2004.

Doug is a veteran of the United States Air Force Strategic Air Command, where he served as a Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander.

Doug has been fortunate enough to meet, know, or cover many of Tulsa's most notable people. Before entering private law practice in 1982, Doug served as a Law Clerk for United States District Judge James O. Ellison in the Northern District of Oklahoma.

You can hear Doug's oral history on the podcast and website VoicesOfOklahoma.com.

Chapter 2 – 6:00
Doug's Parents

John Erling (JE): Today's date is June 24, 2025. So Doug, would you state your full name, please?

Doug Dodd (DD): Stephen Douglas Dodd.

JE: And why do you go by Douglas?

DD: Well, when I was a kid, I had a cousin two years older than me. His name was Steve. And so they just dubbed me with Doug because it was less confusing for the family.

JE: We are recording this interview in the facilities of Voices of Oklahoma. Your birth date?

DD: June 21, 1949.

JE: Your present age is?

DD: 76.

JE: Where were you born?

DD: Tulsa, Oklahoma, Hillcrest Hospital, not Medical Center -- Hospital.

JE: Your mother's name, maiden name, where she was born, where she grew up.

DD: My mother's name was Wanda Juanita Buttress Dodd, and she was born in Cameron, Oklahoma in 1924.

JE: Tell us about her, what she did, her personality, what was she like?

DD: She was sweet. She was the next to the youngest of 13 kids. Lived on a farm. Her dad was a farmer, and so the best I could tell from talking to her over the years was what she did other than go to school was cook and clean. She and her sisters and my grandmother would clean for the boys and men in the family who were farmers, and so they would be up at the crack of dawn and they'd fix three squares. That's where I think she got the habit of cooking like she was cooking for farmhands. There was never a small meal.

JE: Her personality, outgoing?

DD: She was, yeah, pretty outgoing, but not overly outgoing. She was just very pleasant, very sweet. She smiled a lot. And I told you when she went to school, she went to Jenks High School and was one of the class of 35 students' graduating class. So that's how far back Jenks went at that time.

JE: Then your father's name?

DD: William Andrew Dodd.

JE: And where was he from? Where did he grow up?

DD: He was born in Mountain Home, Arkansas. And grew up there until he was young, maybe six or seven. He was born in 1920, and his mom and dad and brothers and sisters moved to Tulsa, and from that point on, he was a Tulsan.

JE: What did he do for a living?

DD: In the 40s, I can't tell you exactly during his teenage years, although I know he dropped out of high school his senior year to help support the family. But he went to work for Public Service Company of Oklahoma. He was a janitor, and I remember hearing him tell me about having to empty spittoons and things like that. And then he went into the Army Air Corps in 1942, right after Pearl Harbor, and spent from '42 to '46 in the Army, fought in the European theater, and then came back. Public Service had guaranteed that his job would still be there when he got back. So when he came back, they said, well, you don't need to be a janitor anymore. So they had him driving a semi-trailer truck called the Ready Kilowatt show, and he would drive the semi all over to little tiny towns in Oklahoma that didn't have electricity or who had just gotten electricity, and it was to preach the wonders of electricity. This trailer was full of electric appliances so they could show these folks what electricity could do for them.

JE: How to use electricity.

DD: How to use electricity, and he did that for a few years. Ended up in customer service. He was doing high bill complaints. I remember particularly in the summertime in the early 50s, if you had air conditioning, you were rich. But he would get high bill complaints like the big mansion that was on Riverside Drive, the big white mansion that they tore down for the Gathering Place. Anyway, the owner would call him out and say, I'm paying too much for my electricity. And so he did that for a long time, and then he moved into marketing and finished his 42 years at PSO as an assistant manager of marketing.

JE: His personality then must have been outgoing?

DD: It was not terribly outgoing. It was really strange. He dealt primarily with dealers, appliance dealers and things like that, so he wasn't a stereotypical salesman. But he knew where to get stuff and how to—if the president of

PSO needed a refrigerator, he called Dad and Dad would go to the place to get a good refrigerator.

JE: Do you know how your parents met?

DD: I don't know how they met. I do know that it was after the war, and Mom was a student at Dron's School of Business. That was her post-high school education, and she became a secretary. During the war, she worked for Douglas Aircraft out at the airport as a secretary, and then she moved on later to Amarada Petroleum before it was Amarata Hess. Anyway, they met, dated for a while, and were married on Halloween 1946.

JE: So your mother did have a career. Did she continue that?

DD: You bet. She worked more than 40 years. She retired, I think it was after Dad did, but she retired maybe in the early 90s.

Chapter 3 – 10:17
Education

John Erling (JE): So let's talk about your education. Where did you go to grade school?

Doug Dodd (DD): I started at Alice Robertson Elementary School in Carbondale on the west side and went there up through the 4th grade, I believe. Then we moved across the river, we deserted the west side and bought a new house, and I went to John Marshall Elementary for my 5th and 6th grade years. Went to junior high school at Orville Wright Junior High School near 45th and Peoria, and I had always planned to go to Edison. That was the high school. But in the meantime they messed me up and built Memorial. Since we lived south of 51st Street, they said, well, you go to Memorial, and I spent a totally miserable sophomore year there.

JE: Why was it so miserable?

DD: My story then, and probably still is, that I was not part of the wealthy family type deal. You draw those lines whether they're true or not, but I

didn't have a great number of friends. My future wife was there, same class, but I told her later that she was a "soc". So I never had an opportunity.

JE: Your wife's name?

DD: Elaine Elslow. Elaine Elslow Dodd.

JE: Then you transferred out of Memorial.

DD: I did. I transferred to Central High School, the big red TP downtown.

JE: You were actually allowed to do that?

DD: Yes, it was the only high school at the time to which you could transfer. You couldn't transfer from Memorial to Edison or Will Rogers or whatever. And the reason that I asked for a transfer was transportation. I said my parents both work downtown, they can drive me to school every day, and I was at that time too young to drive. And they bought it. So I finished my last two years at Central.

JE: You're an only child then, aren't you?

DD: I'm an only child.

JE: Right. All right, so then how was your experience at Central?

DD: Central was great. I loved that school. I loved the kids. It had a little bit of everybody there. It had really rich kids and really poor kids and a lot of kids in the middle. It had all races. At that time it was just Black and white, African Americans and Caucasians. Although we had some Native Americans, but you didn't call them that. They were just kids. But it was wonderful. I had opportunities. I got into the drama club, sang in the opera club, participated in the school musicals and the all-school show, The Daze. I loved it.

JE: So you were a performer back then, weren't you?

DD: Yes.

JE: I didn't know you were a singer.

DD: Yes, I was a singer. I was a member of a barbershop quartet called The Highlights. There were four of us who used to practice in the boys' room at Central because it was all marble in there and it had great acoustics.

JE: All right, so that was a good experience. What year did you graduate?

DD: 1967.

JE: And then what did you do?

DD: I went to college. My first semester was at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. I had intended to go either to OU or TU, but John Brown offered me a scholarship and my parents thought that was a really good thing because I didn't have to pay tuition. So I went there for one semester and found out that they had a broadcasting department, and I liked it. At John Brown, as a freshman you don't really major in anything, but I took broadcasting classes. And then after one semester, I'd had about as much of Siloam Springs, Arkansas as I could take, so I transferred back to TU in January of '68 and finished my undergraduate degree at TU.

JE: Broadcast was fascinating to you early on, or did you ever think, I want to be on the radio? What were those thoughts?

DD: Yes. When I graduated from Central, a classmate of mine's brother was an ad salesman for a radio station. You may remember the call letters of KOME. He called me one day and said, "Hey, you want to be an announcer?" The summer of '67. And of course, I was just drooling. I said, yeah, that'd be great. The reason he wanted me was because I had a third-class license, a third phone, which meant that I could take transmitter readings and all of that business. KOME by that time had been a big station decades before, but it was kind of a crummy station. I didn't spin records. I gave station breaks live, as we all did, and I played tapes or network. We had CBS and ABC, the Arthur Godfrey Show, Don McNeil's Breakfast Club out of Chicago, and we played individual 15-minute things like Conservative Viewpoint by Robert Welch. I didn't know until decades later that Robert Welch was the head of the John Birch Society. But I learned later. But that's what I did that summer. It was great. I loved it.

JE: So then you had thoughts about, well, this is maybe what I want to do in my career?

DD: Yes. I thought this is great. I'm not out digging ditches. If it's raining, I'm indoors. I thought it was great. So when John Brown had this program, I went with it. And when I went from there to TU, I found that TU also had a radio and television production program, and that's what I got into.

JE: Well, they had KWGS then.

DD: They did. KWGS—William Grove Skelly of Skelly Oil was the benefactor of that radio station at TU. I think it started the year before I was born, 1948.

JE: I believe it was the first FM station in Tulsa.

DD: It was.

JE: So Ed Dumit was a name?

DD: Ed Dumit was my professor of broadcast studies. Ed Dumit was fantastic. If you knew Ed—

JE: We've interviewed him for our series.

DD: Magnificent guy, and I miss him to this day. A class like broadcast announcing—the book was written by Ed Dumut and Ben Henneke, who later became president of TU. It had the basics of broadcast announcing, but the real chore in broadcast announcing with Ed was you had to be able to pronounce every classical piece in the world and their composers and the orchestras. We ran the Texaco Metropolitan Opera broadcast live on Saturdays and the station played nothing but classical music. There was no real news, no NPR back then. It was just KWGS, or as we called it, Queegis.

JE: So as a student you could participate on that station?

DD: You had to, yes, and I loved it. It was great.

JE: Oh, that was part of your curriculum, wasn't it?

DD: It was part of the class.

JE: Right. So further energizing your thinking, I'm gonna do this now. For some they might think, why do I need college? I can go out and get a job at a radio station and jump into it right now. That was not the way you thought.

DD: No. I had been raised, you're gonna go to college. Neither of my parents went to college, and you're gonna go. You're gonna go to college. So I just never had any doubt I was gonna go. I was gonna get out in four years. That's what I did. And this experience in college did help me in

broadcasting because in 1969 I got a job at KMOD. By the way, for our listeners today, it was not a rock and roll station when it first started. We called it "music for groovy grownups." We played Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, Enoch Light, the Electric Light Orchestra. It was all pre-programmed out of Dallas, so we didn't really have any choice in the music that we played, but we did have live announcers.

JE: What year was this about?

DD: It started in '69.

JE: All right, so then you were on at a certain time of the day?

DD: Yes, I was the night guy. I worked for a long time from 6 to midnight. Then they gave me a break and I worked 7 to 1 in the evening. I would read the news from an AP wire machine, just rip-and-read type stuff, but not very much. I was truly an announcer and a disc jockey primarily.

JE: All right, so does this come after you graduate or while you're in?

DD: I was still at TU.

JE: You were going to school and working nights like that.

DD: Yes.

JE: Wow, that was quite a schedule you kept.

DD: Yes, but the good news is, the courses that I was taking in broadcasting meshed together, and I think it probably helped.

JE: You got a high grade, right?

DD: Got a high grade.

JE: All right, so then you graduate from TU when?

DD: In May of 1971.

Chapter 4 – 9:00
Missile Officer

John Erling (JE): Then what happens to you? Went into the Air Force? Why?

Doug Dodd (DD): I got into Air Force ROTC my freshman year and stayed with it. My dad had been in the Army Air Corps. My whole family, like most of us of that era—our fathers or uncles and everybody had served in World War II. So that was another thing. It was just sort of expected. It wasn't demanded, it was just expected. And I remember in 1969, after I went to what they euphemistically called summer camp, which was like a six-week basic course, Forbes Air Force Base, when they had the first draft lottery number. I was watching the drawing—the very first one. I just knew that I was gonna get a high lottery number, and I thought, well, if I get a high lottery number and I'm not going to be drafted, made 1A and go to Vietnam, I might drop out of ROTC. And when they called June 21, 1949, my draft lottery number was 60. And they were taking up to about 195 at that time.

JE: So you would have gone.

DD: I would have gone, and I did. It's not that I minded going, but I liked the idea of being an officer. And so I finished ROTC and went into the Air Force.

JE: So tell us what that meant—where and when and what did you do?

DD: I was the second guy in our detachment to get my orders in the spring of 1971. On my dream sheet that you fill out, I said I want to do American Forces Radio and Television or Aerospace Audiovisual or the Information Office. I thought, I have a college degree, I'm qualified for that, and I said I'll serve anywhere in the world, doesn't matter, you can send me to Vietnam and be "Good morning, Vietnam," whatever. And I was the second guy to get my orders, and it was to be a Minuteman missile launch officer. So that's what I did. They sent me—and I thought, I don't have a science or technology background. Why would they pick me for that? My first assignment was at Vandenberg Air Force Base, and that's where they train you to be a missile officer. We stayed out there for three months, got trained, and then moved. My first permanent station was at Ellsworth Air Force Base, Rapid City, South Dakota.

JE: And here you said you'd serve any part of the world and—

DD: Except South Dakota. Yeah, no, you don't have a choice. I mean, you go where they tell you to go.

JE: Of course you do. So then what did you do there in Rapid City, South Dakota?

DD: Minuteman missiles—Minuteman missiles is all I had experience with. They had 1,500 missiles nationwide, and we had 150 of them at Ellsworth. You serve in two-man crews. Back then it was two-man crews. They have since dropped the gender barrier and now they have crews maybe one man and one woman, but back then it was two guys. You served 24-hour shifts. They fly you out in a Huey to your launch control facility, and they were generally 100 to 150 miles from the base. They drop you off, you check in, give them the password—we didn't have a grip or anything—and they send you down the elevator about 100 feet in the ground to a launch control facility, which was a big concrete and steel capsule with an 8-ton blast door on it, like a bank vault. You go in, strap on your snub-nose .38. We always wondered why we were carrying sidearms down there because we had an 8-ton blast door keeping people out. But anyway, and you sit there for 24 hours essentially waiting for World War III.

JE: For the command to set off one of those missiles, is that true?

DD: Or more likely to set off all the missiles.

JE: You ever fall asleep down there?

DD: With two of us down there, we were allowed to have sleep shifts. My commander, who was a captain, I was a second lieutenant, he gave me the first sleep shift and I would sleep from 6 to midnight on an Air Force cot with a tarp that pulled around it. Then I would get up at midnight and he would go to sleep, and he'd sleep till changeover the next day. But you're up most of 24 hours—actually a little longer than that because it takes a while to get in, check in, and it takes a while for the relief crew to come in.

JE: Since my home state is North Dakota—

DD: You know about this, yeah.

JE: From Grand Forks, we had the Grand Forks Air Force Base, and they had missiles as well, right?

DD: Yes, they did.

JE: So they were doing the same thing that you're doing in Rapid City.

DD: That's correct. And there were two bases in North Dakota: Grand Forks and Minot. They both had 150 missiles just like we did.

JE: And we both know how cold the Dakotas can be, and the 50 below zero and all that sort of stuff—

DD: Right. No place for an Oklahoma boy.

JE: No. And I got out of there as fast as I could. So then how many years were you there in Rapid City?

DD: I only served about two years on active duty as a missile officer because in late 1972 we were starting to wind down our involvement in Vietnam. The Air Force sent out a notice and said if you've been a commissioned officer for longer than 18 months, you can apply for an early out. What they were looking for—they needed vacancies or billets for all these pilots and officers who were serving in Vietnam, and they knew that they were gonna have to put them somewhere. So they were trying to empty out a little bit, and I took advantage of it.

JE: While you were in Rapid City, did you do any radio work?

DD: I did. Because I would work generally two shifts—alerts—a week, sometimes three. I had days off in between. It was called C2 R square, combat crew rest and recuperation. It meant that if you were on for 24, you would be off for 48 hours. I checked in with the news director, who was the only guy who I recognized. His name was Jim Neal. Jim Neal was a very prominent news anchor and news director at Channel 2 in Tulsa back in the 60s, but he was from Rapid City, moved back up there, and he worked for Duhamel Broadcasting Company, KOTA AM and TV. I went in, met him, said hi. One of his daughters went to TU. It was a nice happy circumstance. He got me a job there. It was a part-time job because it was only on my days off, and I would spin records and read news.

JE: So that was fun. So then you did your two years there, and then what happened?

DD: After I separated from active duty, we stayed in Rapid City for maybe six more months, and I went full time at KOTA TV as a reporter. I had a photographer and we'd go out and do stories. We covered the American Indian Movement, we covered Wounded Knee. It was a pretty exciting time back then. But when Elaine finished teaching school that year, we said let's move back to Tulsa.

JE: I was gonna say, Elaine was with you. Was she teaching there in Rapid City?

DD: Yes. She got her first teaching job in Rapid City public schools and loved it, but she wanted to come back to Tulsa and so did I. Also, I had decided by that time I wanted to go to law school. So I took the LSAT at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and applied to TU and OU and got accepted to both. So I came back to go to law school at TU. This is 1973.

Chapter 5 – 14:34
KTUL KOTV

John Erling (JE): But didn't you go to work for KTUL?

Doug Dodd (DD): I did. What happened was, as a law student, I needed money. I had the GI Bill to help pay my tuition, but we needed to live. So I applied at KTUL Channel 8 and got a job as, guess what, an announcer. I worked the night shift from 4 in the afternoon until sign-off, which they had back then. We used to sign off at midnight. I did station breaks—"KTUL-TV Channel 8, Tulsa"—that kind of thing at the hour. The other announcer at that time was Cy Tuma, famous guy, I loved Cy Tuma, and he worked from sign-on until 4 in the afternoon.

JE: OK, let's go back to this law decision. To be a lawyer, was that part of your psyche way back when, or what made you decide that you wanted to go into law?

DD: I had an uncle who was a lawyer. He was an oil and gas lawyer, and I thought he did well. It just seemed like a normal thing to do. I wanted to

have that in my pocket, to be able to do that. During my time in the Air Force, that was sort of a break from working full time in media, and I thought, well, I'll go to law school. But I had to work, so I did Channel 8. And I discovered to my horror in about October or early November that I couldn't go full time to law school and work 40 hours a week. My grades were just not gonna make it. So I either had to stop working and devote myself to law school, or stop law school and keep working. That's what I did.

JE: You kept working.

DD: I kept working and dropped out of law school in '73.

JE: But we pick up on that later.

DD: Yes, we do.

JE: All right, so you did documentaries at Channel 8, KTUL. I believe you worked with Bob Gregory. For when he spoke, he thought it was the voice of God.

DD: Bob Gregory.

JE: There you go. And didn't you work with him in that series called Oil in Oklahoma?

DD: I certainly did. I was the associate producer for Oil in Oklahoma. We did 11 one-hour documentaries on oil in Oklahoma thanks to our station owner, Jimmy Lake. Jimmy Lake was really high on that idea.

JE: Talk a little bit about Bob Gregory—what he was like to work with, and what kind of a person was he to be around.

DD: Bob was an amazing guy. He was a great newsman, and he was vice president of news for Lake Television, which had KTUL in Tulsa and the station in Fort Smith, I believe. Bob had gotten a job prior to that at CBS News in Washington. He was a CBS News correspondent in Washington—and a very good one. Bob was an amazingly self-educated man. He did not have a college degree, but he read everything. He took The New York Times and The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal, and he would sit in his office at Channel 8 and read all the time, and read books. He was amazing. At some point, Jimmy Lake called him,

as I understand it, and said, I want you to come back to Tulsa and be our vice president of news. So he left CBS and came back to Tulsa, and that's what started him at Channel 8.

JE: And then you've already referred—his brother was—

DD: Bill Pitcock.

JE: And he did what?

DD: Bill Pitcock was one of the anchors at KOTV with Clayton Vaughn. Bill did have a college education—in fact, I think he had a journalism degree from Columbia University. Bill was a very smart guy, but he was very affable and always joking. Bob was more serious. Bob had a sense of humor, but he hid it pretty well, at least the time that I was working for him.

JE: Was he difficult to work with?

DD: No, not really. I mean, he insisted on writing scripts, or starting scripts, or sometimes he would have me start a script and then he would edit it. He would blue-line the whole thing. He had to be, and appropriately was, in control of all of that stuff. We had a great cinematographer, Paul Murray, who shot all the video on that. Bob as well. We put together those 11 one-hour documentaries on film. We were not using video. We were running A/B rolls of film so the switcher could go back and forth and fade in and out. It was a lot of work. It really was.

JE: I'm grilling you about Bob Gregory because those of us in the business were all in awe of him. Yes, I was even around him. He invited me to lunch one time and I didn't know why, but we got it together and had a nice time. So that's why I've been grilling you about Bob Gregory, and there are many listening maybe who knew of him. But then you didn't stay at KTUL Channel 8.

DD: No. I'll tell you, John, when I came back from the Air Force, I had always wanted to work at Channel 6, KOTV. I wanted to work in the news department for Clayton Vaughn. He was sort of my hero. And so I had applied from time to time—do you have any openings, do you have any openings? Finally, in late '75, he called me and said, I've got an opening, do you want to come work for KOTV News? I said, absolutely. So I quit Channel 8 at the end of '75 and started at Channel 6 in January of '76.

JE: And what was your role there?

DD: I started as a reporter. We were at that time running the first hour-long newscast in Tulsa, and Clayton was a master of filling that up. We didn't just do 30-second stories, rip-and-read type stuff. We did actual stories. Sometimes I remember we had a photographer you may have heard of, Gaylord Herron. Gaylord Herron was a magnificent photographer. He was an unusual guy, but he was a great photographer. I remember Clayton let him do a seven-minute essay on raindrops. But it was a great essay. We had other people on staff that people would remember—Rocky Stegman, Susan Bunn from the old days, Rex Doherty, who just died not too long ago. At some point they lost their assignment editor—I cannot remember who the previous one was. And Clayton said, I want to make you assignment editor. That meant I didn't cover stories anymore. I sat at a desk and made other people go do stories. I did that for a while, and then Clayton decided he did not want to continue being managing editor or news director and anchor. So he resigned as managing editor, news director, and anchor. The station manager told me that I would be the acting news director. I did that for about 90 days or so, and then they finally made me news director. So I was able to move up sort of accidentally there and became the news director at Channel 6.

JE: So that was quite a nice assignment.

DD: It was a nice assignment, although it frustrated me because I wasn't out covering stories. I was having other people cover stories.

JE: But at Channel 6, did you do documentaries there?

DD: I only did one. For Will Rogers' 100th birthday, we did an hour-long piece on Will Rogers. It was great—I mean, the subject was great. I don't know if the documentary was great. But we spent a lot of time at the Will Rogers Ranch and other places that Will Rogers haunted back in his days. I was devastated when I saw that the Will Rogers Ranch burned to the ground in January of 2025.

JE: Maybe you've already alluded to this, but some of the other people who were on the air when you were there—sports people?

DD: Mac Krieger. You may recall the Mac Krieger incident. Late on a Saturday night just before the 10 o'clock newscast, coming out of the CBS show

Mannix, it was in a commercial break and somebody hit the wrong button. There was a dimly lit shot of the studio and Mac was flipping off somebody. It seemed to last for an hour, but it was only like 10 seconds, and they got off of it. Speaking of people who have recently died—Gaylord Sartain was a cameraman back then. He was always jousting with Mac Krieger. Although Gaylord denied it later, I was going to school with a KOTV news director named Ralph Bardgett, who was a legendary switcher, TV director. I called him as soon as the newscast was over that night and said, Ralph, what happened? Ralph was downplaying it. He said it was just a mistake. But I'm convinced that Gaylord was causing trouble with Mac Krieger, and that caused the inadvertent display of a digital salute.

JE: Right. But Mac Krieger lost his job over that?

DD: Well, no. He was suspended for two weeks, but he ultimately left. I don't know whether he left at the station's request or his. It was a very tough thing for Mac.

JE: Should he have been suspended? Shouldn't it have been the switcher who was suspended?

DD: That's a good question. I wasn't running the station. I wasn't even working at the station at the time. But it was one of those deals where network shows have opportunities for local commercials. You switch from network to another one, and at this particular time somebody just hit the wrong button. Instead of hitting the commercial, he hit the studio cameras. I'm sure that person got a firm talking-to.

JE: Well, it was the talk of the town, wasn't it?

DD: It was.

JE: But speaking of Gaylord, who did die this year—in fact, last Thursday, June 19th—he was 81 years old. When you were at the station, were you around him then?

DD: No. When I started in '76, Gaylord had already moved Mazeppa Pompazoidi's Uncanny Film Festival and Camp Meeting. He moved that show from Channel 6 to Channel 8 while I was still at Channel 8. As an announcer, I ran audio when they were taping his show.

JE: Gary Busey was part of that.

DD: He was part of that. He started on the show after it went to Channel 8.

JE: John Millaway was part of it.

DD: Yes. Sherman Oaks, as we knew him.

JE: But Gaylord—then you saw him, and he was a cut-up, funny all the time?

DD: He was funny, he was a cut-up. But I was up in a booth running audio, so I wasn't in the studio during the show. I could see it on the monitors and was trying to keep up with whose mic needed to be on.

JE: But isn't it true that a talent scout actually saw him do that show, and that's how he went to Hee Haw?

DD: I'm told—and I learned this from the stories after Gaylord's death—that Jim Halsey had called him and said, would you like to have Roy Clark on Mazeppa? Of course he said yes. Halsey, who was Roy Clark's manager, came down with Roy Clark, and I'm told he saw the show and then allegedly said to Gaylord, would you like to be on Hee Haw? So it's amazing how things fold in.

JE: Where he was for 20 years on Hee Haw, and then went on to do many other things as well.

DD: Gaylord was a real talent. He was a comedic talent, but in his later life he did some pretty serious acting roles too.

JE: And he was an artist.

DD: He was a good artist.

JE: Mayfest selected one of his paintings as a poster, as a matter of fact.

DD: That's right.

JE: I had him on my radio show one time. I was not aware of his background except that I knew he was a funny man. I normally don't insert myself into these things, but I've got to tell you this. I knew he was funny and I was trying to get him to be funny and relate to him, and I talked a little bit about his weight. He kind of went along with me, but at one point he said he was gonna tell the joke of the day, and he said, "But this will be the last time I'm ever on your show." And I have that recording. Of course it was,

and I don't even know if we asked him back. It was my bad. I should never have mentioned his weight, because he was a hefty guy.

DD: He was a hefty guy.

JE: Right.

Chapter 6 – 4:10
PM Magazine

John Erling (JE): It was at KOTV. Did you do a PM Magazine?

Doug Dodd (DD): I did. First of all, at KOTV, we changed station managers at some point and, as often was the case, a station manager brought in his own news director and sometimes program director from wherever that person had been before. So he brought in a guy to be news director, and I was removed as news director and was gonna do something else. I did the noon news. I did a thing called Tulsa Morning, a live show at 7 or 7:30 in the morning. It was generally an interview show. I said, I'm happy to do that show, but I wanted to have real interviews. I didn't want it to just be—apologies to the girls—selling Girl Scout cookies, or talking about the next flower show. I wanted it to be a news-type deal, and they let me do it. That was a great time. I don't remember how many months or a year I did that, but I had guests like Jesse Jackson, anybody who had a book on the market and was willing to come to Tulsa, Marie Stans from the Watergate days. I really enjoyed doing that.

At some point, it had to be 1980 or 1981, we started a Group W Westinghouse Broadcasting syndication of PM Magazine. Maryanne Massey, who was our art director, became my co-host, and we were the hosts of Tulsa's PM Magazine.

JE: And that aired at what time?

DD: That aired at, I think, 6:30 in the evening—6:30 to 7, after the local news.

JE: So what did that program feature?

DD: It featured longer pieces than regular news pieces. It was not as fluffy as Entertainment Tonight, but it was kind of light. It had several format pieces like Jane Chastain, who was an exercise person, and Chef Tell, who did cooking segments. All that was done in Pittsburgh and they sent it to us. Any station that had PM Magazine around the country would submit their local pieces, and they would send some of those out. So one night we would have a story from San Diego or another from Chicago. We were responsible for doing one of those long pieces a week, which we did.

JE: That was pretty good about Maryanne Massey. She wasn't a broadcast person. What was she doing?

DD: She was the art director.

JE: So what made them think that she could be on TV with you?

DD: I have no idea, but it worked. She fell right into the broadcast idea and was good on camera and actually covered stories pretty well too.

JE: How long did that format, PM Magazine, go beyond you?

DD: It went beyond me. I left in December of '81 when I graduated from law school. By the way, I'd gone back to law school at night while I was at KOTV. That's when I was doing the morning stuff. I'd go to Channel 6 at 6 o'clock in the morning and do the morning show and then the noon show. Then I'd go home and study and go to law school at night.

JE: Wow, the bags are almost gone under my eyes. So how long working that schedule did it take you to graduate from law school?

DD: Three and a half years.

JE: That was a grind.

DD: It was a grind, but I'm glad I did it. When I left, PM Magazine continued, but they brought in a guy named Christopher Lewis, whose mother was Loretta Young.

JE: So he did it with Maryanne Massey?

DD: That's correct.

Chapter 7 – 6:09
Judge Ellison

John Erling (JE): Law school—you graduated in 1981. Then what did you do?

Doug Dodd (DD): I was extremely fortunate. I had applied to become a federal law clerk for the Honorable James O. Ellison, who had taken the bench in ’79. I knew him from church actually, and I applied. In December of ’81 he called me and said, I’ve got one of my two law clerks leaving. It’s a one-year stint, and I’d like you to be my next law clerk. So I went to work for him and spent a year there. Honestly, it was one of the best jobs I ever had in my life.

JE: What kind of things were you doing, or cases you worked on?

DD: Law clerks in the federal system are essentially the court’s lawyers. There were two of us. We did research for the judge. We wrote orders for the judge, which he oftentimes would edit liberally. Back in those days, lawyers would call me or my partner, Leonard Pataki, and say, hey, we’ve got this case coming up, we’ve got this problem. So we had a lot of lawyer contact, which stopped long after I left. You can’t get a hold of a law clerk anymore. They are shielded just like the judge is. You have to call the deputy court clerk. That’s the only person you can really talk to. But I loved the work.

I’ll never forget, I had to take the bar exam. When I started to work for Judge Ellison, he said, OK, you’re going to take the bar exam in February. That’s your primary job right now—to pass the bar. I want you to take as much time as you need to study for the bar and don’t worry about me, I’ll be OK. But of course, you continued to write orders and do research and all that stuff. When I took the bar in February of ’82, I was petrified because I thought, what happens if I fail the bar exam and I’m working for a federal judge? Fortunately, I passed, and it was good.

Judge Ellison was top of the mark in terms of federal judges. I loved working for him.

JE: Is he still alive?

DD: He died a few years ago, sadly. In fact, he was in the same class of new judges as Tom Brett, Jim Ellison, Lee West in Oklahoma City, Frank Seay in

the Eastern District of Oklahoma. There were four new district judges appointed by Jimmy Carter. Carter also appointed the first woman in the 10th Circuit, which was Stephanie Seymour.

JE: I've interviewed Lee West too, and Stephanie Seymour. That's a great story.

DD: Yeah. Lee West was magnificent. A fun guy.

JE: Very funny.

DD: Yes. All that having been said, I think that group of four judges that came in at the same time were four of the best federal judges we've ever had in Oklahoma.

JE: So you were a law clerk for Judge Ellison for a year, right? And that's scheduled for one year?

DD: That's correct. The judges generally have a one-year clerk and a long-term clerk. The idea is you give more new lawyers an opportunity to work for a federal judge. That's the one-year clerk—that's what I did.

JE: So then you were shopping for a job?

DD: I was. You develop real strange opinions of law firms when you're the court's lawyer and you see all these firms coming and going. I had decided I did not want to work for a firm that had more than 15 lawyers. I did not want to work for a big firm. I didn't have good feelings about what it would be like. So I sent my resume to a bunch of smaller firms—good firms, but smaller firms. I got a call from my former clerk partner, Leonard Pataki, and he said, hey, I'm over at Doerner, Saunders now and I haven't seen a resume from you. Have you not applied? I told him the story. He said, well, I don't think you'd view us as a large law firm. We don't feel like a large law firm. So I sent him a resume, went over, interviewed all day, and got a job. My first job with a private law firm was with Doerner, Saunders, Daniel, and Anderson.

JE: That was tall cotton, wasn't it?

DD: That was tall cotton.

JE: So then your specialty for them was what?

DD: Initially nothing. I wanted to do litigation and I did, but brand-new associates do a little bit of everything. I did some tax problems. I did some real estate stuff. I wrote some wills. I did everything. But I wanted to do litigation. Sam Daniel, who you've also interviewed, called me in one day in 1984 and he said, you used to work at Channel 6, didn't you? I said, yeah. He said, well, I was hunting with their general manager, who was his buddy, and he said, our law firm that we have right now has a conflict with this new case we've got. Can you handle it, Sam? Sam said, sure we can. And so he called me and said, handle it. That was the first time I actually did an actual media law case.

It was a bad case. KRMG was the defendant—in fact, that's what caused the conflict that led that case to us. We represented KOTV and CBS in that case. It was one that needed to be settled—and some cases do. We got it settled, the client was happy, and I've been their lawyer ever since.

Chapter 8 – 13:30
Law Cases

John Erling (JE): OK, I'm curious, because you brought up KRMG. Can you talk to me a little bit more about what that case was about?

Doug Dodd (DD): It was a case where an African American couple—he was a preacher, and I don't know that she was also involved in the church—lived in a pretty rundown house out in Creek County. They would be gone on evangelistic trips sometimes for a month at a time. The owner of the house, as I recall, had put notices on the door saying you owe rent or whatever. After a while, the owner had the house bulldozed. He just tore it down because he was gonna do something else with the property. So when they came back, they had no house.

It made a big story in the Tulsa World, Tulsa Tribune, KRMG picked it up, KOTV picked it up, CBS picked it up. Harry Smith came down from Washington and covered that story. As the facts developed in that case, we believed that the owner of the house probably was not the malicious, mean person that he was being portrayed by some media to be. I don't

think we ever portrayed him that way. But we settled the case, and I think that was good for everybody.

JE: How did you settle it?

DD: Money.

JE: Who paid who?

DD: All the defendants who settled paid something to the owner of the house. Any details beyond that would be confidential.

JE: Did the racial aspect come in on this?

DD: Not in the settlement.

JE: No.

DD: But it did in some of the coverage. There was one story, as I recall, I think it was in the Tulsa Tribune, that focused on, did this guy do it because they were Black?

JE: KRMG became a defendant because they had carried the story.

DD: They had carried the story.

JE: Right. So then that launched you into specializing in media, First Amendment law, and that kind of thing.

DD: It launched me into that type of thing. The longer I represented KOTV, the more involved I got. At the time it was still owned by Corinthian Broadcasting, which owned it when I was there. Then it was sold to A.H. Belo, a big media company that also had WFAA in Dallas and others. When they acquired it, they had good in-house counsel who got me involved in what at that time was called the Libel Defense Resource Center, a national organization of media lawyers. I've been a member ever since. It's now the Media Law Resource Center.

JE: Sometimes we wonder how our lives work out—for you to end up being a media lawyer in a profession you'd already been in.

DD: That was not my plan. When I graduated from law school, I never said I want to be a media lawyer.

JE: I have a list here: civil trial practice, eminent domain law, copyright litigation, libel and privacy defense. Do we have a case that you were involved in? There is one here that you pointed out—Linda Stewart and Griffin Communications. Tell us about that case.

DD: It was Stewart v. NYT Broadcasting, which owned KFOR in Oklahoma City. The New York Times Company owned KFOR at the time. And Griffin, which owned Channel 9. I represented Griffin. That case had to do with a news story those two stations and others ran based on police reports. The police called them and said, we are looking for this person, here's a picture of her, who we believe was using a stolen debit card in Oklahoma City or Norman. It started with the police. As you've seen over the years, the police said, we're looking for this picture, call 596-COPS, whatever, and that's the way it started.

So the story was run with her picture. We didn't know her, we didn't know her name. We ran the story. It turned out—and we admitted once we found this out—that she was not the woman who was sought for stealing a credit card. That came from the Norman police. She sued both stations. I represented Channel 9 and Griffin, and Bob Nelon, who's a friend of mine, represented Channel 4. We tried to get that case resolved by motions and everything else, but we had to have a jury trial.

It was about a week-long jury trial. They were going after both TV stations. We had the reporter from our station, the reporter from Channel 4, and they also used one of their anchors as a witness. Ultimately, the jury returned defense verdicts. Our verdict for KWTV was a unanimous defense verdict—that means we won. KFOR, strangely, was 11 to 1, but they still won. It was an interesting case. It took a long time to get finished and tried, but it was a good result from a jury trial. By the way, the judge we had in that case, almost immediately within months after that case was over, was appointed to the Supreme Court and is still there—Noma Gurich. Her appointment had nothing to do with our case, I assure you.

JE: Why would the stations be held liable when they were going with the information that was given to them?

DD: That was the basis for our defense. The information that we broadcast in the stories, under Oklahoma law, was privileged. There's a statute that says

if you're reporting accurately on information you get from a public agency or the legislature or, in this case, the police department, it's not subject to being a libel suit.

JE: Right. Did Linda Stewart leave it at that? Was that it?

DD: She appealed, as I recall, and the appellate court affirmed the jury verdict. Then it went away.

JE: When we take people who are in the public eye, you can say pretty much anything you want about them, to a degree. Tell us when libel is involved with a public personality, say an elected official. The bar is pretty low, isn't it?

DD: Well, the bar is high for the plaintiff. That comes out of New York Times v. Sullivan, the Supreme Court case that established what we call actual malice. I always say to anybody who will listen that "actual malice" is the most misunderstood term since "one size fits all." Actual malice simply means that the publisher—radio, TV, or newspaper—published false and defamatory information with actual knowledge that it was false and defamatory or with reckless disregard as to whether it was true or false. That is an important part of libel law across the country and here in Oklahoma.

JE: One more case—Yates v. Gannett.

DD: That's a more recent case. It arose from reports that were broadcast and printed back in, I believe, June of 2020. If you recall, in June of 2020 the George Floyd murder had just occurred and there were nationwide protests, also Black Lives Matter issues. I think that's when they painted the street in Greenwood. Donald Trump was coming to Tulsa to kick off his 2020 campaign. So there was a lot going on.

What happened was there was an active-duty police major who participated in a podcast with a local radio station announcer about police work. In one of those episodes, he quoted some studies from Harvard and Yale and other places, which he said showed that if you look at the numbers of crimes and police involvement, police officers should be shooting more African American people than they are. It seemed to be a very strange thing.

My client got a hold of it, wrote the story, published the story. Gannett, the lead defendant, picked it up. They ran it in USA Today. It was on MSNBC or NBC. That case went on for over a year. But we won that case on our motion to dismiss because it had to do with our exercise of free speech. There's a special law in Oklahoma since 2014 called the Oklahoma Citizens Participation Act. We used that act, and the trial court in Rogers County granted our motion to dismiss. That was a big deal.

It went up on appeal. The appellate court affirmed the dismissal. And what I think is one of the more important parts of that decision is the appellate court, for the first time in very specific terms, found that the OCPA—that anti-SLAPP law—was constitutional. Because every time we filed one, the plaintiff would say it's unconstitutional because it deprives you of a right of jury trial or whatever. The appellate court took care of that. The Supreme Court of Oklahoma denied certiorari, so it became a published decision.

JE: Yates—who is Yates in Yates v. Gannett?

DD: He was the police major. I don't know if he's still active—it's been several years ago. He's the one who said these things on the podcast, which the media quoted. That was another thing—we said it, you know, we quoted him, we used his words. Truth is a defense in libel.

JE: Seems pretty simple as you and I are sitting here talking about it, but it became a big deal.

DD: It became a big deal, and I was delighted that we had the good result.

JE: Interesting. You have bar admissions to Northern, Western, Eastern Districts of Oklahoma, 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. You could argue before the Court. Have you ever done that?

DD: I've never argued before the Supreme Court. I had one case that we won in the Eastern District of Oklahoma. It was appealed to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. We won it in the 10th Circuit, and then the plaintiff sought certiorari from the U.S. Supreme Court. We responded and opposed certiorari. It was a case called Shower v. Harper's Magazine Foundation and Peter Turnley. The U.S. Supreme Court denied cert. So basically, we won that case from the district court and the appellate court.

Chapter 9 – 9:30
Congressional Campaign

John Erling (JE): But then you got into politics. You ran for District 1 U.S. Representative.

Doug Dodd (DD): I did, in 2002.

JE: Tell us about that race.

DD: That was the race, and that's the reason I left the school board. I still had time, but I didn't want to be on the school board and running for Congress. At that time, Steve Largent was our congressman, and he announced that he was going to resign from Congress and run for governor. So all of a sudden we had an empty seat and there needed to be a special election. I ran, and I came close in that first race in 2002. I think I lost by 10,000 votes.

JE: And you ran against John Sullivan.

DD: John Sullivan was the ultimate Republican nominee.

JE: And he had run against, in the primary, Kathy Keating.

DD: I thought that Kathy Keating would win the primary. I figured my race would be against Kathy Keating.

JE: Right. But you lost that race. Then you came back around again. Is this like hitting your head against a brick wall?

DD: Sometimes.

JE: Why did you decide to come back and run again?

DD: I still thought that we needed somebody in Congress that would do things differently. My sense was that our incumbent at that time was not doing things for the First District of Oklahoma.

JE: But you ran as a Democrat.

DD: I did.

JE: And this area is known as Republican.

DD: It is.

JE: I think there are those who've always felt that any Democrat running would probably get about 40% of the vote, and that's about it. And you hovered around that number.

DD: I did. That first race where I lost by 10,000 votes, and the districts changed too between 2002 and 2004. So you had different voters that you'd not talked to before. And of course, hope springs eternal in an office seeker's breast. You think that if you just go talk to these folks, you can convince them that you've got the answer, or at least are willing to ask the right questions. I bless the hearts of anybody who's willing to run, because it's not always a dead loser, but it's a very difficult race to win.

JE: Especially as a Democrat in this area.

DD: Right. The First District has always been a majority Republican district, but not by any stretch of the imagination as wide a margin as some districts that we have. Jim Jones, a Democrat, held the First District seat for 14 years.

JE: So maybe that gave you some hope.

DD: It gave me great hope, and Jim supported me.

JE: So what do you think you learned from that whole experience? And would you have done it again?

DD: I would not have done it again. Two different elections was enough.

JE: You would have run the first one if you could do it again, but not the second time?

DD: I'm not even sure I can say that. After two losses there's a point at which, whether it's correct or not, people start tagging you with things like "three-time loser," you know, things like that.

JE: Was that tough to lose and handle that in the community?

DD: It was tough to lose, and I think sometimes your supporters take it harder than you do. People give their money, they show up, they walk houses, they go to meetings, eat rubber chicken—they do all the stuff. But turnout of Democratic voters is still a problem, and I don't know why. If we had

turned out more, we could have prevailed, because the Republicans don't have 100% turnout either.

JE: Right. And you talked about your time on the school board, how it's different today. Running for Congress is a different deal today too.

DD: I don't want to jinx anybody. I think every time somebody has the guts and the wherewithal to say, I want to run and make a difference, I intend to get elected—you have to have that in your brain and in your heart. You're not running just to run. You've got to believe that you can do it, and I did. I think most of the people who have run in subsequent years have had the same feeling. They hold out that good hope, and I hope we keep having people like that.

JE: Was asking for money difficult for you?

DD: Yes. It was. And I had a person in 2004 who had won a primary election down in the Second District. That's back when Brad Carson was running for that House seat. She told me, you've got to get on the phone dialing for dollars. So I set up a room in my headquarters with a telephone and a computer. I borrowed a guy from the state party, and he sat there with me. Except for going to make speeches or debates or whatever, I was in that little room for about eight hours a day.

JE: And you had the same speech—you probably had it written in front of you.

DD: I memorized it.

JE: The same speech.

DD: Well, it depends. Number one, it depends on whether you know the person. But you're calling total strangers that are on a list that tells you they have given to other candidates before, so you always call.

JE: So would someone say no to you?

DD: Oh sure.

JE: And you would just say good night and good luck.

DD: That's not what you tell a potential donor. If the potential donor is mean or angry or whatever, I always tried to listen to what they had to say. But at some point you know they're not going to support or contribute, and at

that point it becomes almost a waste of time to continue to talk for a long time. So sometimes I would cut it short. But I was never angry or mean with anybody that didn't give.

JE: Your Democratic involvement went deeper—you were a delegate to the Democratic convention, right?

DD: I was an alternate delegate in 2000, which was the one that nominated Al Gore out in California. I was a delegate, but as long as the primary delegates were on the floor, I was not. I was credentialed and everything. It was a great experience. I loved going and doing that.

But my first convention was not as a delegate, but as a reporter in 1976. I was working at KOTV, and Clayton Vaughn was the news director. He had a history of KOTV going to both the Democratic and the Republican convention every four years and covering it. He was going to the Republican convention in Florida in '76, and he told me to go to New York. So I did. I flew to New York with a photographer and covered the convention.

JE: And who was the candidate in '76?

DD: Jimmy Carter. Jimmy Carter was the nominee. There were other nominees too—Ted Kennedy and I can't remember all the others—but it was not a slam dunk race for Jimmy Carter. Not only did he get the nomination, he ultimately beat Gerald Ford.

JE: That was exciting for you to do that.

DD: It was very exciting.

JE: And then was that your only Democratic convention as an alternate?

DD: Yes.

JE: But—

DD: But then I was a delegate again in 2012, when President Obama was renominated. Elaine and I also went to the 1988 convention in Atlanta just as visitors, and that was the year Mike Dukakis was nominated. Obviously, he did not prevail.

JE: I admire your involvement—even going as attendees—in the Democratic Party and in the process. That was instilled in you a long time ago.

DD: More by my wife than anybody else. I grew up like so many in Oklahoma did who were born in the 40s, 50s, and 60s. Oklahoma was a totally Democratic state. If you were a Republican, you didn't have a place until sometime in the 60s and 70s when Henry Bellmon and Dewey Bartlett became governors, and ultimately Frank Keating. But even after that, the breakdown in the legislature was still pretty solidly Democratic. I can't remember what year that changed, but it did. And now it's just the opposite—now the Democrats have a small minority in each chamber of the House. That's the way it used to be for the Republicans.

Chapter 10 – 7:50
First Assignment

John Erling (JE): So are you practicing law today? Are you in a retired status, or what are you?

Doug Dodd (DD): I'm still practicing. I sometimes joke and say I'm gonna practice till I get it right. But I still practice. I probably don't spend quite the number of hours as I used to, and part of that is you have younger lawyers who—training is not the right word—but you're exposing them to things and giving them your view based on history and what you've done before. We have some great younger lawyers. We don't have too many people my age in the firm, but we keep going, and I enjoy it. I think I still do a good job, and as long as that's the case, I'll keep doing it.

JE: What about women in your business? Did that change over the time since you went first to Lerner Stewart till now? More females?

DD: Yes. And strangely enough, our firm—before I graduated from law school and joined it—was one of the first decent-sized firms in Tulsa to have a female partner, and that was back in the 70s. That partner was Stephanie Seymour. She left us to become a 10th Circuit judge, but by the time she left, we had already hired at least two or three other women lawyers, and we loved them. They might move out of state or go in-house counsel

someplace. We still have one who has been there maybe a year or two longer than I have, who still practices and does environmental law. Linda Martin—she's great.

JE: I would encourage people to listen to Stephanie Seymour's interview because she has great stories about being a female even at Harvard, when a man said to her, "What are you doing here taking the place of a male?" And she said, "What are you doing here taking the place of a female?" She was feisty. It's a great interview and particularly young girls, ladies, should listen to that.

DD: I agree.

JE: And so how do you feel, now you're in your law firm and you are now an elder statesman?

DD: I think that's gilding the lily a little bit. I don't know if I'm an elder statesman. There's such a thing as institutional memory, and one of the advantages of being one of the older guys is I remember things like the way it was when I joined the firm—when Harold Stuart was still a named partner. And Harold Stuart's another great guy, by the way. I love your interviews like with Jon Stuart about Harold. Harold was a magnificent businessman and lawyer, although he gave me my very first assignment when I came with the firm. He showed up in my door one morning and I was still trying to get my desk set up. I won't imitate his voice because it would break your microphone, but he came in and said, "Doug, I've got something I want you to do." "Yes, sir." He was one of the senior partners.

He told me he had an employee who had been ticketed, a chauffeur. He had been ticketed by the Tulsa police for outraging public decency. I said, what's happening? He said, well, he was waiting for me outside a restaurant and he had to go to the bathroom, so he went into an alley and relieved himself—they didn't have public bathrooms—and somehow a police officer saw it and gave him a ticket. It was a ticket back then. Anyway, I defended this guy and got the charges dropped. Harold and I were good friends.

JE: Sure you were. He was very charismatic, wasn't he?

DD: Absolutely, absolutely. And his wife, who was Bill Skelly's daughter, Joan—I didn't see her frequently, but she would come to parties and events and things like that. I liked her. Of course, she died before Harold did.

JE: That's an interesting story. So as you look back, is there anything you're very proud of in your profession—any one of your professions—or any highlight that you might look back on and say yes?

DD: I'm glad I've been in both broadcasting and law, and I am proud of the legal profession generally. There used to be a joke that 99% of lawyers give the other one a bad name. That's not true. I think the bar is full of well-thought, well-educated, and ethical lawyers. I still think that's the vast majority of lawyers today. Are there some that do not carry that standard? Of course, but that's true of any profession. The bar association, both state and federal, watch that very carefully. I've always told young associates, if you follow the rules, you're 10 points ahead of the guy who doesn't follow the rules. He may make you mad, he may yell at you, or he may violate some rule of conduct, but ultimately—it's not really karma—but it comes out that if you follow the rules and do things correctly, you're gonna be just fine.

JE: You just answered my next question—what advice would you give students—and so you've already done that.

DD: Follow the rules and pay attention to clients, and that's important. A lot of cases last a long time. Of course, lawyers charge by the hour, by the tenth of an hour, whatever, in most cases. Some lawyers, I think, don't grasp the importance of communication with the client. Sam Daniel taught me this. He was a big fan of the one-line letter back before we had internet. He said, if you haven't talked to your client in a couple of weeks, write them a one-line letter: "Still working on your case, nothing's happened yet. Let me know if you want to talk." Let people know that you're there, and if something happens, let them know. People need to know that they have somebody on their side, and that's a hard thing. Lawyers are busy with 10, 15, 20 different matters, and it's hard sometimes—particularly for younger lawyers—to think, oh man, I need to send an email to client X and say, nothing's happened yet, but I just want to let you know we're still watching it.

JE: So how would you like to be remembered?

DD: As a good lawyer, as a good man. I don't think I rise to the level of having been a good broadcaster, but I enjoyed it and I think I did OK. And also a person of faith. I'm a Presbyterian. Elaine obviously drew me into that denomination. We both are ruling elders at our church. She's on the session. I'm not right now, but just to stay after what that particular faith does for you is good.

JE: Very good. Well, Doug, this is fun. I've known you for many, many years, and for us to sit here and do this—your life is fascinating, and the two different professions—so thank you for sharing your thoughts.

DD: Thank you for giving me the opportunity. I still am not quite sure how I earned the privilege of being on Voices of Oklahoma, but I love it.

JE: The past hour and a half proved why you're on Voices of Oklahoma. So thank you, Doug.

DD: Thank you.