# Ed Dumit

After 38 years of teaching and a lifetime of broadcasting, Ed's voice touched manyears and hearts in Tulsa

**Chapter 1 — 1:28**
**Introduction**

**Announcer:** Edward S. Dumit actually started his radio career at the age of five when he had no idea he possessed a beautiful radio voice. Ed was 84 when he died June 20, 2014. His voice is still heard identifying Tulsa radio stations, KWGS and Classical 88.7. Generations of students learned the art of broadcasting and proper diction under his tutelage at The University of Tulsa as Associate Professor Emeritus of Communication. He served TU for 38 years as a teacher of broadcasting courses and as manager, program director, and arts producer of public radio station KWGS.

For 39 years Ed served as University of Tulsa commencement announcer, during which time he prepared pronunciations of approximately 30,000 graduate's names. Following retirement in 1993, he continued until 2001 as producer and host of public radio broadcasts of concerts of the OK Mozart International Festival and Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra. Dumit presented preview lectures for every major Tulsa opera production from 1970 to 1995 and hosted the preview feature preceding each Tulsa Philharmonic Masterworks Concert from 1992 to 2001.

Listen to Ed tell his story, which is brought to you by foundations and friends who are preserving Oklahoma's legacy one voice at a time on VoicesofOklahoma.com.

**Chapter 2 — 13:05**
**The Dumits**

**John Erling:** My name is John Erling. Today's date is September 29th, 2011. Ed, if you will, please state your full name, your date of birth and your present age.

**Ed Dumit:** My name is Edward Dumit. My middle name is Salim, which was my father's name. I was born August 14th, 1929 at St. Johns Hospital in Tulsa. My present age is 82.

**JE:** We are recording this here in my home in Tulsa. Ed, let's start talking about your family. Do you have any recollection of your grandparents?

**ED:** My grandparents were in Syria, where my parents were born and never came to this country. All I know about my mother's father is that he was the keeper of the vineyards in Tripoli, but it's not the famous Tripoli in Libya. In Arabic, it's Troblos. Oddly enough, nothing much more was told me about mother's parents. On the other hand, my father was growing up at the Presbyterian Mission School in Antioch, Syria, which was at that time partly under the Turks. I suspect that my father came to this country when he did because the Turks were about to conscript him into the Turkish Army, which of course would be definitely Muslim. My family for generations and generations has been Christian.

Dad came to this country in 1908 or 1907. Mother came about the same time to join her brother who had come in 1898 to find a better life here. I have pictures of my dad's parents. His father was a minister and teacher. Then Dad also taught in that same mission school. He taught in the girl's school because the sexes were separated. As a result, since he was single he was not allowed to have a housekeeper so he became very domestic out of necessity. While Mother, in the meantime had come when she was 13 years old to this country to be with her brother, and they were immediately going door-to-door selling fancy linens out of suitcases.

In those days, there were not many shops that carried imported table clothes and handkerchiefs and so on. Most of the wealthier people were accustomed to buying from the peddler who came to the door. They did much of that in the Great Lakes area because there were so many resort spots there. So, Mother never grew up to learn how to cook or do many other domestic things. As a result, when Mother and Dad married he immediately became responsible for the food. Mother simply cleaned the house, because they were working from 8:00 in the morning until 6:00 at night six days a week at the store that Mother and her brother had set up.

I suppose I need to clarify how it is that mother's maiden name was Dumit. mother's name was Anisa Dumit. There was never any reference to a middle name.

**JE:** That was her maiden name?

**ED:** That was her maiden name. That confused people here in Tulsa because mother and her brother, Elias Dumit came to Tulsa in 1912 after spending a few years going door-to-door. Immediately when they got here, they joined the First Presbyterian Church. My father didn't arrive on the scene for 12 more years. Everyone then became confused at the church as to who my father was because all those first years I was growing up I was sitting on that front pew at First Presbyterian with Uncle and Mother.

Father, who was the most religious of all, most spiritual, preferred to do his own devotions at home, so people at church just assumed that Uncle was my father. It was not

a case of cousins marrying. These were two different Dumit families, one in Tripoli, the other one in Antioch. They didn't know each other before they came to this country, so they were both legally Dumits and were destined to be together. Their citizenship papers for both of them were in 1908 or 1907. Since Mother and her brother kept moving across the country and ended up in Butte, Montana, a mining town and didn't get to Tulsa until 1912, this indicates that next year it will be 100 years that my family will have been in Tulsa.

When Mother and her brother came, the population was about 20,000. Just as at Butte, Montana, Uncle had noted that there was a gold rush going on, and that might be a good place to be, he soon decided they didn't want to live that far north. He left Mother, who was only 18 years old at the time to take care of the shop they had set up in Butte while he took a train down south. He discovered Tulsa, Oklahoma, wired Mother to close up the shop and come on down to Tulsa, which she had probably never heard of because that's where they were going to settle. Tulsa's oil boom was the big attraction. During the 1920s, they sold oriental rugs to most of the people settling the Maple.

**JE:** Maple Ridge?

**ED:** Yeah, that grand neighborhood, while the oilmen were furnishing their homes with oriental rugs. The store that Mother and Uncle set up was E & A Dumit for Uncle Elias and Mother Anise's name. When Dad was invited to come down from Kansas City, in 1924, and became the third partner in January of 1924 the name was changed to Dumit's Rugs and Linens. We, in the front half of the store, sold fancy linens from Madeira, Portugal and mostly from China. We also had quite beautiful lamps. For some reason, they also carried at that time Kimonas [Kimono's], which were very popular for the ladies as bathrobes. And then oil paintings, fancy vases, lots of cloisonné and cinnabar from India and other places in the South Pacific area.

Then in the back two-thirds of the store was filled with stacks of beautiful oriental rugs. Uncle and my father, Salim, would lift the rugs off the pile to the ones that the customers were most interested in, and take them to an open area so the customers could examine them more carefully. You had some customers who would look at two or three and immediately make a decision, and others who would stay for hours with practically every rug in the store being shown. My father developed quite a few muscles and was very good at moving rugs around. Uncle was the front man—his name was Elias. In Arabic, it was (El-e-as).

**JE:** Where was Dumit's Rugs and Linens located in Tulsa?

**ED:** That's a good question because although the family did fairly well in the '20s, after the depression they never quite recovered. The result was they were never able to build a building of their own or have a store in a building that they had a financial interest in. So during the 44 years that the store was in existence, from 1912 to 1956, we were in six

different locations downtown, because every time the landlord would increase the rent the folks would move to another location. Their first location in Tulsa was at 4th and Main right on the corner. The Majestic Theatre was right next-door.

Mother said that there was a hole in the bathroom wall. At times of the day when there were no customers, she could look through that hole at the movie being shown in The Majestic. Anyway, they were there for several years, and then moved to 414 South Boston, which was directly across the street from the entrance to the Philtower. They were there for something like 13 years or more, and then moved the next time there was an increase in rent next door to Jenkins Music Company at 517 South Main.

We were there for nine years. When I was born, they were in the Boston [Avenue] location, but I remember more about being right next door to Jenkins. I could go into the store, and listen to records, and doodle on the piano that sort of thing. Well, after nine years there, they moved right straight across the street next door to the Elephant Trunk Company. That address, instead of 517 was 516 South Main. We were there for a bunch of years. I wrote a reader's report about that for the Tulsa World several years ago showing each place we had been.

We then moved next to Harold's New Stand, which was between 6th and 7th on Main Street. We were always right in that area between 4th and Main and 7th and Main, and on Boston just that one time when we were at the Philtower building. From that location by Harold's, we moved to our final location, which was right across the alley east of the Ritz Theatre, at I think it was 12 West Fourth. Then in 1956, my uncle was crossing 3rd Street after he, Mother and Dad had taken the bus from downtown. They would've gotten off the bus at 3rd and Olympia on the way to the new lot swimming pool in the new lot park.

Uncle was in his own world in his older years. He just started walking across 3rd Street without paying any attention to the traffic. A young man whose wife had just gone into labor struck Uncle and he was killed almost instantly. Then it was necessary to sell the store to settle the estates of the two principle owners, Mother and Dad and my Uncle. By coincidence, I had just been hired in September of 1955 by The University of Tulsa. Uncle's accident was a month later in October. I was coping with a new job at TU, which I was responsible half of my time for running the student-operated noncommercial station KWGS, then the other half time teaching courses in broadcasting.

If you can imagine what it would be like to go from being a radio announcer into a university situation, where you were running a station and teaching courses, and then Uncle's accident, and I had to go downtown frequently toward the end of the day while the going out of business sale was being carried on. It took six months from October until, I think April of 1956 before everything had been sold to the bare walls. It was sad because no one had been interested in buying the store and keeping it going. So when it was finally sold, I was tremendously relieved because then I could concentrate on TU.

## Chapter 3 — 5:03
## Ed's father

**John Erling:** State your father's full name and where he was born.

**Ed Dumit:** Dad's name was Salim Jacob Dumit. Jacob was his father's name. He was born in Latakia, L-A-T-A-K-I-A. But while he was just a few months old, the family moved just a little further away to the big city of Antioch. He grew up in Antioch and came to this country when he was 33 years old—I think it was.

**JE:** Did he come with other members of the family?

**ED:** Yes, he and his two brothers, Dad was the oldest. The second was Sam Dumit and the third was Hanna Jacob, which in this country was John, Hanna is similar to Johanahan or whatever the pronunciation is in German of John—named after John the Baptist, I guess. John and his two brothers somehow, and I've never gotten a satisfactory explanation of this, went all the way from New York to Los Angeles. The three brothers set up a jewelry store there. Then, eventually, they moved to Kansas City, Missouri where the family has been for a very long time. I have 25 cousins living in Kansas City.

At first, in Kansas City, they all three I think were working at a lamp factory, very ornate lamps, some with fringe on them or hanging jewels. Then, Uncle decided, that's Sam, to set up a rug-cleaning establishment, which to this day is still operating in Kansas City, Missouri. His son worked with him and then the son's son and now it's the son of the son of the son of Uncle Sam. It's thriving in Kansas City.

John formed his own church. The whole family was very religious. John set up a church that is still in existence in Santa Monica, California. That's where their headquarters is. He set up followers in Kansas City. Then about 1939 or so, his doctor suggested that he move to California because of his asthma. They set up the church in Santa Monica. They had other satellite groups in New Mexico and as far up as Canada.

When he moved from Kansas City, I think something like 40 families moved with him. At home, in my library, I have all the issues of the Truth Review, which was a monthly magazine that they published and then several books by my uncle. They believed deeply in healing through prayer. Now, the church is operated by Uncle's daughter and Uncle's granddaughter and her husband. The husband, Reverend Newton, is the minister of the church now. His wife and then my cousin Psyche, P-S-Y-C-H-E and the last name that Uncle took was the French version of Dumit, D-O-U-M-E-T-T-E. That branch of the family is Doumette.

If we had taken that name, I would not have heard my last name being mispronounced every day of our lives because D-U-M-I-T, for some reason, strikes the majority of the

population as "dumb-it." Very few people look at it and say, "Dew-mitt." Now, I just laugh about it, but it used to bother me no end.

**JE:** How was it your father came to Tulsa?

**ED:** He had somehow made a connection with Uncle Elias. Uncle was accustomed to taking a couple of buying trips a year to New York. He would go to the importers there and select the individual rugs or other items that he would have them send to Tulsa. Somewhere along the way, they heard about each other. Uncle wanted to have a third partner. I was never told this, but I have a sneaking feeling Uncle was also looking for a husband for his sister. As I said, Dad came down in January of 1924. Then he and Mother were married in July about six months later.

**JE:** They were married in which church?

**ED:** First Presbyterian Church, Mother and Uncle had joined the First Presbyterian Church the first week they got here. Our life these 100 years has all been centered around the First Presbyterian Church.

## Chapter 4 — 12:44
## Ed the performer

**John Erling:** Your first recollection of where you lived in Tulsa.

**Ed Dumit:** Up until mother got married she was living with Uncle and his wife and two daughters on the corner of what turns out to be 7th and Phoenix. The block skips from 4th Street the 7th Street all in one block. They lived on the corner. Then when Dad came into the picture and he and mother were married they moved right across the street at 414 South Phoenix. Dad bought the house from a Mr. & Mrs. Compton, whose daughter was Joyce Compton. Joyce wanted a career in the movies. She was a Billy Holliday type of personality. So the Compton's moved to California and my parents moved in as soon as they were married.

Joyce Compton established an amazing career as one below the line. She was not the star of the movie, but she was the supporting actress in one picture after another. I used to muse over that fact that my room was the one that Joyce Compton had grown up in. At any rate, we lived in that house until I was 28 years old.

Then I moved the family to my present location where I've been for 55 years in the same house on Gillette in what came to be called the Gillette Historic Neighborhood. Not because I lived there you understand, but we were the first neighborhood in Tulsa to become a Historic Neighborhood. Then suddenly all over town neighborhoods wanted

to add their names to that. That's a wonderful development to have that tie in with your neighborhood for historic reasons.

**JE:** Your first school you attended?

**ED:** A Mrs. Fulghum, F-U-L-G-H-U-M, had come from the East and formed Conway-Broun Private School about a block west of Denver. I think it was on Elwood, on the North side of town. At any rate, Conway-Broun, Broun was B-R-O-U-N, hyphenated; these are all family names of Mrs. Fulghum's family. They had kindergarten through high school and my parent's sent me to the private school for two years. I was there for kindergarten and first grade. Then my parents transferred me to the public school system and Riverview was my grade school.

**JE:** Is there a point very early in your life where you sensed that you were going to be a talker, speaker? That you were theatrical?

**ED:** This is another interesting question because as I was growing up it was assumed that I would continue the business and be a businessman, even when I graduated from Central High School. In between was Horace Mann Junior High. I enrolled at OU as a business major, but after one year I realized that my career really would be in broadcasting. It's not surprising, because I made my so-called debut on radio at the age of five, because mother was concerned that I might speak English with an Arabic accent.

**JE:** Did your parents speak with that accent?

**ED:** She didn't have much of an accent herself. Of course she was in the United States from the age of thirteen on. My father had a little more of an accent because he didn't come here until he was 33. He knew English, but he never felt as comfortable with the language. At any rate, mother had me enrolled with a teacher; I think her name was Quisenberry. She had her classes in one of the rooms in the Akdar Temple, which was one of Tulsa's most interesting buildings that unfortunately was torn down. It was between 3rd and 4th, or 4th and 5th, right East of Denver with minaret's and all of that.

At any rate, I had classes with Mrs. Quisenberry. At that time Jenkins Music Company was presenting a weekly program called *The Kiddies Review* on the 50,000-watt voice of KVOO. She had me audition for them and I was one of many children who did anything; it wasn't all doing poetry, it wasn't all musical instruments. In fact, we used to laugh over the fact that occasionally they would have a baton twirler. Have you ever tried watching a baton twirler on radio?

**JE:** (Laughter)

**ED:** I started out my career with this short poem that I cannot get out of my mind. It's with me all the time. *I had a little pig*...I don't know if I can get through it without laughing. *I had a little pig with a nose that could dig all around in the dirt. It didn't look hard so I tried it in the yard. I did it alright, but it hurt.*

**JE:** That's been in your head now for 75–76 years, hasn't it?

**ED:** Yes. I don't remember any of the other poems that I recited during grade school, but I was on, not regularly, but off and on; on *The Kiddies Review*.

**JE:** It's interesting that your mother really sent you to these classes for speaking.

**ED:** Yes that's why I never developed an Oklahoma accent.

**JE:** But she had no idea you were going to be a performer, or maybe she sensed that you would be. But that was all by chance and by luck wasn't it?

**ED:** Yes. Because my parents never encouraged me to take lessons with a musical instrument, because they were sure that if I chose that profession I would starve to death. I wanted very much to take piano lessons. I had so many friends, who were being forced to take piano lessons, and here I wanted to and my parents were afraid I would take the wrong career path as a result.

Next door to our house on Phoenix were the Woolsey's. Mr. Woolsey had the Woolsey lumber yard on West 3rd Street, half way to Sand Springs. Mrs. Woolsey was involved with music groups. She played the piano. When I was in late junior high school, just before going to high school, Mrs. Woolsey started to take me with her husband, the three of us, to concerts and things after getting my parent's permission. Their focus all their lives was making enough money to live and that meant working six days a week from eight in the morning, as I've said, to six in the evening. The house was just a place where we would eat and sleep.

Thanks to the Woolsey's who took me with them for civic music, groups like that, civic music would bring the world's greatest musicians to the Convention Hall. I remember hearing Ezio Pinza doing a complete recital with piano. I remember Jascha Heifetz when I was in high school. I remember at a point in the concerto he was playing with the piano being the orchestral accompaniment, that in the slow movement you could hear the trains going by north of Convention Hall.

Because I'm not sure they had air conditioning at that time; they had big fans. They would frequently open the back door off the stage. It seemed that the trains always chose the worse times to go by. I still remember Jascha Heifetz playing the concerto while the train was making choo-choo sounds. At any rate, that had a tremendous influence on my life thanks to the Woolsey's.

Of course at school I was in the fourth grade musical. Then in junior high school at Horace Mann, I was in the boy's glee club. We did a believe it or not, minstrel show one year and I sang *Old Black Joe*. I was the first act. Usually the first half was a variety of things. Then the second half was where Mister Interlocutor, who was usually white, would question or motivate the rest of the group, who were all black in minstrel shows. To perform they'd braid my hair and I sat on a barrel and sang *Old Black Joe*. It was a very moving moment.

**JE:** Were you in blackface then?

**ED:** Yes I was in blackface for the first half. Then during intermission I had to remove all of that because I was the interlocutor, or as they said "interlocutator", so I was the only white one on the stage. All the rest of the boy's glee club was in blackface. I don't think you're likely to see any show like that these days.

**JE:** When did you discover that you could sing?

**ED:** I discovered that I could barely sing. I never had a beautiful singing voice. In grade school and junior high they weren't requiring that you be an operatic personality. At Central High School I never performed in *THE DAZE*, which was their annual talent show. I never sang at Central High School, but I was in the a capella choir there. Then when I got to TU, Dr. Boland Brustill was writing original musical comedies every year and he cast me as not usually one of the leading characters, but the comic. I was able to sell a comic song quite adequately and have done that quite a bit since then. No more, but I did then.

**JE:** You performed on KVOO for several years then.

**ED:** Actually *The Kiddies Review* came to an end. But Allen Hubbard, who was one of the principle announcers at KVOO, also gave private speech lessons at his home on South Baltimore; near 17th and Baltimore. KVOO let him produce a 15-minute children's program of drama. At that time, *Let's Pretend* was a weekly half hour show out of Chicago in which a different fairy tale was dramatized each week. Allen Hubbard started this group, which was called *The Junior Playhouse*. It was I think something like 10:45 to 11 o'clock on Saturday mornings.

We would rehearse at his house on Wednesdays. I was on that all through the 5th grade and the 6th grades. I was essentially debuting in radio on the largest station in town. They wouldn't think of doing anything like that today. I usually before my voice changed was a children's role or the witch in the fairy tales. Because this was before my voice changed basically, but I can still do a witch's sort of sound. Well that's not quite it but I was convincing on a children's program being the witch. That took me right through grade school.

Then of course in junior high and high school there was a half hour program on Saturday mornings on KOME. I got involved with that and then Miss Ronan, at Central High School, continued that on KOME. I was frequently on that, again not every week, because there were plenty of students at Central High School who were able to perform on the radio. Technically, all through my public school years I was getting radio experience.

## Chapter 5 — 4:00
## Radio

**John Erling:** KOME. That was a Tulsa station?

**Ed Dumit:** Yes.

**JE:** What call letters did that transfer to eventually? That station became something else. We don't have KOME.

**ED:** Oklahoma's Magic Empire.

**JE:** That's what it was known for?

**ED:** Mmhmm. I can't tell you what year it faded away. But KMFJ was becoming strong about that time, which was Fred and Mary Jones. Even though I had been on the radio all through those public school years, when I went to OU it was still being assumed that I would take over the family business because I had grown up in the store. After school I would go to the store and wait on customers. At first I would greet them at the door, like a greeter at Walmart. But when I grew old enough I was actually selling handkerchiefs and table clothes. But I still, in my mind, thought that I would probably be continuing to run the store, and that's why I enrolled as a business major. But after one year of participating in some of the campus broadcasts at OU I become more interested in making a career of that. So freshman year I was home for the Christmas holidays.

At that time TU was developing a national reputation for the broadcasting curriculum that Ben Henneke was responsible for starting, and he had gotten W. G. Skelly to donate a station to the University, KWGS; William Grove Skelly. It went on the air in 1947. If I had gone to TU right from the beginning after high school graduation, I would have been there when the station actually went on the air. But at any rate I came home at Christmastime and wanted to look further into the TU curriculum, because also my parents were getting much too old to be running the business. But they hadn't found a way to retire.

So Ben showed me around the brand new KWGS studios and the rest of Kendall Hall. He was about the only person on the campus during the holidays. That's the kind of worker that he was. Just from what he was showing me I was convinced, especially since my parents could use me here at home, that I should transfer to TU.

I finished that semester. I was a business major for just one year, and I made the decision to change to broadcasting at the beginning of the second year. So I had one semester as a broadcasting major at OU, and then switched to TU, to continue pursuing that. As a result of nobody buying our store, we just had to dissolve by selling to the bare walls.

Out of college I was hired by KMUS in Muskogee in June. I worked there for eleven months. In the summer between the sophomore and junior year of college I took a

summer job at KWON in Bartlesville, which was one of the primary training places, as it worked out, for many Oklahoma announcers. They would go to work at Bartlesville for the Case family, C-A-S-E. It was run by Mr. Case, but really run by his wife. She was quite a woman. She was very much business. I was hired for the summer, but at the end of the summer she did all she could to get me to stay there. Then I didn't need a college education, and fortunately I was not taken by that flattery.

## Chapter 6 — 4:03
## December 7, 1941

**John Erling:** In the forties, just the key dates; 1941 December 7th, the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Do you have any recollection of that date?

**Ed Dumit:** Forgive me for laughing. We always listened on Sunday afternoon to the New York Philharmonic broadcast on CBS. My mother, sometimes while we were listening, she would be sitting on the floor near the fireplace trimming her corns from standing all day in the store. She would be trimming the corns while we would be listening to the New York Philharmonic.

**JE:** Corns would be like callouses on her feet?

**ED:** Callouses on her toes.

**JE:** Right.

**ED:** I remember when they broke in to announce that the Japanese had just attacked Pearl Harbor. Then of course at Horace Mann we all collected scrap iron and things of that sort. At Central in the woodwork class our project was to carve model planes of the Japanese fighter planes and the German fighter planes, and they would be sent around the country to help train air raid wardens so that they could recognize the silhouette of these enemy planes.

We were all required to do this, to carve these planes. I tried to help, but my carvings were so bad that none of them were accepted because you wouldn't recognize it much more than a chunk of wood that had been rounded off at the end. Fortunately there were some people in the class who were good at it.

I actually did work with The Red Cross to recruit people to contribute blood. Well as I said, we collected any scrap metal around town and would bring them to Horace Mann. I didn't know until I went to Horace Mann as a student that it wasn't a solid block square building. In the middle was this gigantic playground. I don't know how many people were aware of that unless they went to Horace Mann, but in one corner of the playground we

could see the pile of scrap metal growing. I remember we gave mother's sewing machine. My uncle helped us drive it to the playground spot.

**JE:** What other items did you see in that stack?

**ED:** Well there would be anything metal. There were a lot of pipes. If it was a metal bathtub it would show up there. No matter what size, they were eagerly sought out because they could be melted and used in the making of planes and so on.

**JE:** During those years do you remember rationing taking place?

**ED:** Yes. We had...What letter was it? It was the one that most of the public had. Which would be checked when you were at the checkout counter at the grocery store because only people with a different letter could buy extra gasoline or some things like that. I don't remember clearly what the rules were. All I know is that most families could buy standard groceries or you could buy a certain number of gallons of gasoline.

**JE:** Tires?

**ED:** They also collected...yes and rubber—so used tires. There was plenty of room on the playground for all those items.

**JE:** You don't remember how your family was affected by rationing; whatever was rationed to them?

**ED:** We got by. We didn't use the car too much so we just needed the standard amount of gasoline, but people whose living depending on their trucks or their cars for driving excessive amounts could—depending on what job they had—get permission to fill the tank.

## Chapter 7 — 7:14
## Ed comes to TU

**John Erling:** Let's bring you to TU then and meeting Dr. Henneke because that's obviously changed your life.

**Ed Dumit:** Yes. Ben Henneke and Isabelle Ronan at Central High School, and then Beaumont Bruestel, who was on the speech faculty at TU and later became the head of the department after Ben Henneke became assistant to the president. Those were the three primary influences in my career life.

Ms. Ronan was just one of the finest speech teachers you can imagine. Central High School also had Alfield Larson. Ms. Larson produced "The Days", which was the really popular all school show. She also produced the class plays.

Ms. Ronan produced two plays a year that were referred to as "the speech arts plays". At Central I was one of the few people who performed with both of those ladies

because there was a slight rivalry there. I ended up being in all 3 of the class plays and in both of the speech arts plays. Miss Ronan had been the teacher of Tony Randall, Paul Harvey, and Ben Henneke . She just was a tremendous influence on me.

**JE:** What year did you graduate from Tulsa Central?

**ED:** I graduated in 1947. We'll be having our class reunion next year to celebrate the 65th anniversary.

**JE:** Still a number of classmates around yet?

**ED:** Yes. That class gets together the first Thursday of every month. Now we're at the First Watch for lunch. We were having about 30 people show up. Mind you, we had 777 seniors at Central High School when I was a senior. Central had over 5,000 students. This was back in the '30s.

Look Magazine, while I was in high school, listed Central as one of the ten outstanding high schools in the country. All the faculty members, believe it or not, had master's degrees. I don't know at what point that was no longer maintained. At any rate, in 1939 Rogers and Webster were opened. That was a tremendous relief. Central's population then was reduced from 5,000 to more like 3,000.

Anyway, in my graduating class there were 777. Now here in Tulsa we still get about 25 people, although I'm sad to report that just in the past month five of our class members have died.

**JE:** You mentioned earlier Paul Harvey and Tony Randall. How much older were they? Had they established a career yet when you were there at Tulsa Central?

**ED:** Paul Harvey was at Central along with Ben Henneke . Harvey would've been almost 20 years older than I am.

**JE:** Okay. Well then he would've probably established because Paul Harvey then also was on KVOO.

**ED:** Yes. All I remember about Tony Randall is that he lived in one of the houses that had to be torn down for the Broken Arrow Expressway.

**JE:** At TU you then joined the radio station.

**ED:** I started there the second semester of the sophomore year. Pat Welch was the chief announcer. He was a veteran. At the time I went to TU there were lots of older students who were veterans from the second World War. We had a very mature group.

Pat Welch had the auditions for new announcers on KWGS scheduled at the beginning of each semester. I immediately auditioned and immediately became one of the staff announcers.

Remember, at that time the station was completely student operated except for the faculty member who was the manager of the station. The students were getting experience as program director, chief announcer, music director, and a bunch of others, sports director, and then also being on the sports reporting staffs.

I think by the following year I became the music librarian and music director. The music director part was planning all of the classical music programs. The music librarian part, which was the part that was a student paid staff, I think I was making 75 cents an hour. The music librarian was given the list of selections to be played in each music program. I had to pull those out of the vast collection and stack them in the proper order. At that time they were still 78-RPM. Before I graduated I was starting to add the LP's.

All of those music selections were chosen and typed up. I would pull the records from that and stack them on the proper shelves in the control room. The next day the job was to take all the old ones back and re-file.

**JE:** We should point out for generations to come that LP's meant—

**ED:** Long playing whereas the 78-RPM, 78 revolutions per minute, disks could only hold about four minutes. The LP's made from vinyl, much narrower grooves and needles. You couldn't use a 78-RPM needle on an LP because it would totally destroy. It was much smaller groove and a softer material.

The main difference was that one—one side of an LP you would get up to around 25 minutes. As they improved later you could get up to 30 minutes on one side.

**JE:** Did we say they were 33 1/3 revolutions per minute?

**ED:** That's right.

**JE:** Recording devices back in that time, was there wire recording reel done or not?

**ED:** When I went to TU as a student, we still had some wire recorders, but tape recorders were being introduced more and more. The wire recorders, which had seemed so amazing because you could actually record sound on a spool of wire, they were beginning to be a real nuisance. The only way you could splice them was by actually tying a knot with two ends of wire. If you were editing and needed to cut something out, you would cut it out of the wire and then knot the wire.

A real problem was the fact that then when you would run the spool, it would catch sometimes on where the twist was. Reel-to-reel recording made it much simpler.

**Chapter 8 — 4:14**
**Interviews/Radio Drama**

**John Erling:** While you were announcing you began to interview celebrities?

**Ed Dumit:** Yes this is amazing. I was one of the few people around on the announcing staff who had a deep interest in classical music. Which as I mentioned earlier, had been instilled in

me through the next-door neighbors. At any rate, believe it or not the first concert I did was with the matinee idol of the Metropolitan Opera, James Melton.

He had flown in, in time for the dress rehearsal the day before. I was scheduled to interview him backstage before the rehearsal. Much to my surprise when I got there, and I had never interviewed a celebrity before, the board of directors of the Tulsa Philharmonic was all gathered back there because they were invited to come to the rehearsal. This was in the early days of the orchestra. You would not find the entire board of directors at the dress rehearsal today, but they were all standing around. The engineers setup the equipment for me to do the interview, and I interviewed James Melton backstage at the Convention Hall; holding the microphone up between us while I was being witnessed by all these people who ran the orchestra.

Fortunately, that interview was put on disc. I have a dubbing on CD of my first interview. I'm embarrassed to play it for anyone. It was competent but it certainly didn't reveal my later style to best advantage.

**JE:** Let's jump here to this great opportunity of acting and radio drama. The speech department's broadcasting teacher was...

**ED:** John Keown. K-E-O-W-N. He was the manager of the station and taught broadcasting courses. He was one of my predecessors at the time I was a student at TU. He was as thoroughly professional as he could be, and was very frank with people and was a hard master. Then he left TU to become a staff director at NBC in Chicago. Did that as far as I know for the rest of his life.

He was very good at directing us in radio drama. The wonderful thing about that for me was that I didn't have to look the part. For instance, he did a series of Shakespeare plays...and I was Julius Caesar, I was Othello—Othello in the play, and Macbeth. Not by the wildest stretch of the imagination would I ever be able to play those three roles on the stage, but he worked with me and worked with me. Apparently they were convincing on the radio because two of the speech teachers commented favorably afterwards.

Otherwise, I played a lot of comedy roles or villains. The program was called the KWGS *Playhouse*. It was on once a week. Keown directed it from the control room; gave us all the signals on our main queues. There was the standard sound effects board in the studio with somebody who was expert at creating all of the sounds. We had a little box with sand in it that you could step into to create the sound of someone walking along the beach.

It always fascinated me that even though some places did use pieces of metal shaking it for thunder; that we used a balloon with gunshot BBs in the balloon, and by simply moving the balloon around in the microphone you could get any degree of intensity of thunder and it was very convincing. It could just a distance thunder or it could be a tremendous sound just from BBs rolling around inside a balloon.

**JE:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

## Chapter 9 — 4:26
## Baseball Recreation

**John Erling:** Then you were also involved at KMUS in Muskogee and you were staff announcer at KFMJ, but you worked with sports director Bill Mercer on baseball recreations. Talk about that.

**Ed Dumit:** After doing all this classical music in college, then I was a full-time announcer in Muskogee doing commercials and working with the sports director on the sports broadcasts that were done remotely in the city, or recreated from out of town, I had an exposure that I never had before.

For the ones in town I was operating the board at the station so that I would do the commercials and any announcements to be made between innings of baseball or during the halftime of the football games. Then I would give it back to Bill who was actually on the site of the game. But when the Muskogee team played out of town, the station couldn't afford to send a crew so we were receiving every inning a list on the wire machine of play-by-play. Actually I was ripping it off of United Press.

It would say "inning one" and then it would say who was up to bat and what happened, whether they scored a homerun or whatever. The entire inning would come across. We would start the game broadcast about 20 minutes, if not a half hour, after the real beginning so that there would be time for this information to come off the wire for me to run down the hall and rip it off and bring it to Bill who was seated in the studio facing the control room so we always had eye-to-eye contact. I would go into his studio and hand him the next inning. He had an amazing talent for making you think that this was all read. I would supply the sound effects.

**JE:** So you'd have crowd sound effect obviously.

**ED:** Yes, we had four turntables. We had some of the sound effects on 78 so I would have to be sure that that was on a turntable that was adjusted to play 78s. Then we had the large 16-inch transcriptions.

I would have sound effects on all four of the large turntables. To my immediate right and immediate left would be the 16-inch disks that had nothing but continuous crowd noise. I could start the needle at the outside and it would continue with crowd noise for around 15 minutes was safe. Sometimes I'd let it run a little longer than that. Then I would cross fade into the disk on my left.

You could never tell when we were fading one sound effect record in first and then taking the other one out. So you could have hours and hours of crowd noise to fill up the whole game. On the turn tables that were further away from me, I would have a disk at

78 RPM at that time, there would be booing or there would be cheering or, in one particular case that I did use, the siren of an ambulance arriving. I would be listening to everything that Bill was saying and doing and if there was cheering or anything like that, I would bring that in over the crowd noise, mixing it with it.

One time the rundown indicated that a woman had fainted in the audience. Without talking to Bill at all about this, because he was doing ongoing play-by-play, eventually after he had said that a woman had fainted, I brought in the sound of an ambulance arriving at the field. Of course then Bill had no choice but to weave that into his scenario. That got in his autobiography as an example of the extremes to which you could go in recreating a game to make it sound realistic.

Anyway, he went on from being sports director at KMUS in Muskogee to the Dallas market where he continued as the sports announcer, play-by-play, for all of the Texas teams, the big ones.

## Chapter 10 — 3:58
## Radio Audtion

**Ed Dumit:** When I was about to graduate from TU, about the end of May in 1951, I sent out 30 letters to different stations around Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. I received only five responses. Four of them were that we have no openings available, but one invited me to come to Joplin and audition. I took the bus to Joplin and auditioned but they did not hire me. Then I told Don Brewer, my friend from TU, that this is where I was so far nowhere. He heard at his station KFMJ that there was an opening in Muskogee. That's not one of the stations I had sent a letter to. I drove down to Muskogee, after calling them, and they hired me on the spot.

So you never know how important connections may be. The letters did no good accept get me one audition that I was not hired from, but having a friend at the station hooked me up with Muskogee.

There's another thought, if I may backtrack to that job I had that summer in Bartlesville, I went there to audition but at that time I had never touched an engineer's board, the control panels, and I was told by Mrs. Case whom I mentioned a while ago you'll do a live audition. I was terrified. She's asking me to be the disc jockey from noon to 1 o'clock as my live audition for this job.

Well fortunately a friend of mine from TU, who was older, who was on the staff as chief announcer at KWON, which incidentally stands for Washington Osage and Nowata

Counties, when she said you'll do a live audition I was trying to think how to say I don't know how to do that. When he spoke up immediately and said, "Yes, he knows how to operate the board."

The next thing I knew she had gone back to her office. It was about 1/2 hour before noon. He immediately taught me how to start the turntable, how to turn the microphone on and off and just the basics of what I would need to know. I was almost speechless. At 12 o'clock he had made a break and then it was time for me to start talking. Much to my surprise I was able to get through that hour doing a convincing job. I had no trouble with the announcing.

**John Erling:** Were you playing music?

**ED:** Yes. It was a disc jockey's job. In between while a record was playing I was learning a little bit more about the board. She came back in afterwards and said I was hired. That job I got because I was saved by a friend, and the second job at Muskogee I got because a friend referred me. Then towards the end of my time in Muskogee, Don called from KFMJ and said, " I just happened to notice on the boss's desk that he's about to get another announcer for the staff. I immediately contacted Lawson Taylor, who was the manager, and asked if I could audition and he said, "Yes." I drove back to Tulsa, did an audition, and they hired me. Then I went back to Muskogee and gave notice that after 17 months I was being hired by a station in Tulsa.

## Chapter 11 — 3:49
## KWGS

**John Erling:** Your hiring at TU—how did that come about?

**Ed Dumit:** That was the most fortuitous thing of all. After being at KFMJ into the year 1955, I had vacation coming up for the summer, two weeks vacation, and I went with friends on a driving trip to Colorado for one week. Then I got back and was going to spend the second week painting the kitchen and the bathroom of our house over on Phoenix. I had almost finished the painting when I got a call from Beaumont Bruestle from TU. Now Beau had been one of my principal teachers in all those years at TU. He said, "Ed, how would you like to work for me?"

I assumed immediately that it was on a survey or some two-week project, something like that. I said, "Well, Beau, that would be very nice." He said, "Well, we're in a bind, because Howard, who was the manager of the station and the teacher of the broadcasting courses, he had replaced John Callen, has just given us two weeks notice that he's going to

become the head of the speech department at Ripon College in Ripon, Wisconsin. School starts in two weeks and we have nobody to manage the radio station or to teach the courses." I thought, "Well, can I do this?" But he said, "If you come and have an interview with C. I. Pontius, the President of the University, if he approves, then we'll hire you."

I suspect that Ben Henneke had mentioned me to Beau. By that time, Ben had been elevated and Beau was the head of the department. Then I assumed, if I get this, it'll be for maybe one year. I had my interview with C. I. Pontius. He was a stern businessman. He saved the university from financial disaster during the 1930s, and he had an honorary doctorate. In the middle of the interview, he said, "Are you married?" I said, "No, I'm not." He said, "What's the matter? Don't you like girls?" Can you imagine any prospective employer today...You would be sued if you asked a question like that.

**JE:** And this was in 1955?

**ED:** Yes, 1955. I told him, "Yes, I like girls." Then that was that. I had no idea that I would be there the rest of my life. Somehow, for 38 years, that continued in one form or another. Actually, I managed the station for 17 years.

**JE:** KWGS.

**ED:** KWGS, half time, while I would be teaching. The first year, I was teaching two courses a semester, because I had to get into this. But by the second or third year, I was teaching three courses per semester. The teaching load and the radio station load added up to more than a whole. Somehow I continued doing that for that many years, but then, the major grew so much at TU, we had so many majors finally, that I was needed to teach full-time. We turned the station over to somebody else and I taught a full teaching load. That's when a lot of those other courses got added. Then Gary Chu was the manager of the radio station at the time that the conversion was made to public radio, NPR.

## Chapter 12 — 3:30
## Commencement

**John Erling:** You for 39 years announced at commencement at TU.

**Ed Dumit:** Yes, 39 years which started my third year at TU, 1958. I continued doing for three more commencements after I retired in 1993. Part of the time the commencement announcing was being done by student announcers from KWGS. One year it was done by a person who had not done the proper research and made several errors. At that time, Ben Henneke told me that I was to do the announcing from now on. I never dreamt that I would be doing it then for the next 39 years.

Each year I would go through the list of people who were going to graduate a month or more before graduation and I would mark the names that I wasn't sure of. I would call those people on the telephone and then I would transfer what they told me about the pronunciation into diacritical marks on the cards that they would be handing me each time somebody walked past me to go up and get the diploma off the platform.

Also, I would meet with a representative of the foreign students. I was very serious about this. I would mark all of the foreign names diacritically. There were lots of names from Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, all these people studying petroleum engineering from all over the world.

Then I would sit at the desk and...they came in random order in line. It wasn't like reading off of a printed list. I would be getting a card, which I would read and hand to my assistant while the next student was handing me his or her card so I had no idea who was going to come next. I had to be in control. That's why I marked diacritically every name of the ones that weren't obvious.

I think now, I'm not sure about this, but I believe they're having new students at TU record the pronunciation of their names. Somebody said they thought they were doing that. That would be the easiest thing for the people who replaced me to be able to automatically tune into the student himself or herself pronouncing the name.

**JE:** I bet you hit every one of them right on. You nailed every one of them.

**ED:** In 39 years I got one letter of complaint from the grandfather of one of the students who lived out in Wyoming. I was not concerned about his complaining. I was concerned over the fact that he made the comment that we were being so careful to pronounce the camel jocks names correctly while we weren't doing anything about the straight American names. Unfortunately I had mispronounced his grandson's last name because I thought that it was one that was obvious and it wasn't.

**JE:** There's only one out of thousands and thousands that you named.

**ED:** I think altogether I had prepared around 30,000 names in those 39 years.

**JE:** That's a real testament to you that you just took it so serious.

**ED:** Since then they wisely have two people dividing it up.

## Chapter 13 — 3:34
## Pronouncing

**John Erling:** You also produced audio cassettes, *The Gourmet Speaks*. That was a pronunciation of menu items and cooking terms in French, German, Spanish and Italian. You did that in all those languages?

**Ed Dumit:** Yes. Well, you see, in the announcing class, I taught the pronunciation of those languages as part of the skills. That's one reason that I am sorry when some people think, "Well, the announcing class is just a trade course."

In the announcing classes I was trying to prepare the announcer for anything that he would come across, especially in the news. It wasn't just musical terms they should be able to pronounce. It was also the names of the heads of states, the enemy and so on. We didn't have time to do all four languages in every course, so I would do two languages, at least giving them that much familiarity. It was a regular unit out of the course.

Ben had set the pattern with his courses originally. When I took them over I followed the same format of giving them a sampling of each type of announcing situation so they had a little experience at introducing classical music, they had more experience at working with popular names and so on. Then the ad lib announcing class was the one that concentrated more on being a disk jockey.

**JE:** It must pain you, or does it? That as precise as you have been about pronouncing words, there doesn't seem to be any emphasis on that today. We're pretty glib. We just toss it off.

**ED:** Today the important thing seems to be being clever, which has always been important, but speaking as informally and casually as possible. You see, at the time I was growing up, doing those programs as a little boy at KVOO, I witnessed the KVOO announcers. All of them were required to announce from a standing position. This was before Arthur Godfrey made being a disk jockey popular, where you could actually operate your own controls, play your own records.

I saw all of the KVOO announcers wearing neckties and suits and the announcer's booth had the microphone hanging and the speaker's stand. I'm not saying that we should still be doing that, but I'm just saying that announcing was a little more formal and, at that time, most announcers were being chosen for the depth of their voices and women were not being chosen because, at that time, it was generally considered that they did not have pleasant announcing voices.

You can find people of both sexes who have pleasant voices and others who don't have pleasant voices. The standards have changed. I'm not saying anything against the people who are announcing today, I'm just saying that they're held to a different set of standards.

**JE:** We're more natural today, I think.

**ED:** Yes, and again, Arthur Godfrey gets the credit for popularizing that style.

**JE:** Because he had a program that was network and was nationwide where he would just sit and talk. He was a casual conversationalist.

**ED:** Exactly.

**JE:** What you're saying is, others follow him, that it's okay just to sit, conversationally talking.

**ED:** Yes, you're absolutely correct.

**JE:** He was on CBS.

## Chapter 14 — 3:06
## Miss America/Van Cliburn

**John Erling:** You also coached Miss Oklahoman's during their summers in the '80s and '90s?

**Ed Dumit:** Yes for almost twenty years after Miss Oklahoma was chosen during the summer before they went to Atlantic City for the final competition. I would meet with her once a week and we would drill in voice production, but also interview technique because they were beginning to count interview more and more in their final choice. Shawntel Smith is the only one that I coached who did become Miss America.

**JE:** She credits you for winning Miss America?

**ED:** Well I'm not going to flatter myself frankly. Obviously she had a lot going for her. She and I are still in touch at Christmastime.

**JE:** That's great.

**ED:** As her family gets larger and larger.

**JE:** Let me throughout these names because through the years you interviewed about a thousand musicians, composers, artists, actors and dancers. When I throw out a name tell us if there's a story that's attached to that.

**ED:** Okay.

**JE:** I start out here with Van Cliburn—the pianist Van Cliburn.

**ED:** The Tulsa Philharmonic was very lucky. They had contracted with Cliburn before he went to Russia to be a soloist because he was getting popular in Texas and this part of the country. He of course had gone to Julliard, so immediately after his triumphant return his fee skyrocketed. Tulsa Philharmonic would never have been able at that time to pay for Cliburn, but he had to stick with the contract he had signed before he became famous.

His mother traveled with him at that time always. In fact, they lived together in Fort Worth until she died. Anyway, she was sitting right next to him and I interviewed him. I knew that if I'd said anything wrong she would probably correct me, but the interesting thing with Cliburn is that at that time the conductor of the Tulsa Philharmonic was Vladimir Golschmann who had been the conductor of the Saint Louis Symphony for over twenty-five years. Had just retired from that full-time job and was starting to accept engagements elsewhere.

The honorary music fraternity Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia asked us while Cliburn was here and Golschmann was, to initiate them in the National Organization. That was quite an experience. I did the narration for much of the initiation, and at the end Cliburn who was still in his lower twenties, came up to me and said, "Oh sir, you were so expressive."

**JE:** You found him to be a nice person?

**ED:** Yes. Then of course I've seen him in recent years because I've gone to the last four Cliburn competitions in Fort Worth, so we usually greet each other at least.

## Chapter 15 — 4:32
## Beverly Sills

**John Erling:** Beverly Sills, you interviewed?

**Ed Dumit:** Beverly Sills first appeared in Tulsa as Violetta in "La Traviata" by Verdi. The second time she came, she was doing Lucia. At that time, I was getting to interview all of the guest stars of Tulsa Opera. Now, through the years, most of those interviews have been done in their hotel room at some other time. With the Tulsa Philharmonic, they were usually done during the break in the middle of the dress rehearsal right after the soloists would have done his or her part. Then I would meet them in their dressing rooms and we would record the interview.

Beverly Sills was only going to be available at the dress rehearsal of "Lucia di Lammermoor". In that opera, Lucia is in the first scene of the last Act but she dies. Sills said, "I would like to be interviewed right after I finish my part of the dress rehearsal in my dressing room."

Well, at the end of the first scene she murders her husband, whom she has been forced to marry. She stabs him to death upstairs while the crowd is still downstairs celebrating. At the end of that scene, she said she would meet me in her dressing room. The dressing rooms were not very large at the Brady. At that time the convention hall had been renamed the Municipal Theater. It's had three names.

I set up the equipment during that scene and I was ready for her. She opened the door and there she was, in her bloodstained white gown and she was still holding the knife. It's the most startling picture in my memory in Beverly Sill's dressing room with the lady standing there with a dagger and blood all over her costume. It took me a moment to catch my breath.

We did a ten-minute interview exactly because at that time, I wasn't trusted that much by the opera because they wanted to be in charge of the time schedule and

everything. I was told, well, you can have ten minutes with her but right after that, she needs to be out in the parking lot with some of the board of directors in their cars, just greeting them or something. That interview was exactly to the second ten minutes.

**JE:** What year would that have been?

**ED:** In the '60s, somewhere. Because she came back several times, I interviewed her four times altogether but the other times were in her hotel room. There's a sad story. She was doing her lecture at one of the OK Mozart Festival weeks. I was there and I was to interview her after she finished that program. She of course had a very sad life with two children who were both afflicted. The daughter was totally deaf. Can you imagine such a thing?

**JE:** I never.

**ED:** An opera star whose daughter couldn't hear her.

**JE:** Yes.

**ED:** At the same time her husband was quite ill. She was worn out from all that she had done at the Festival. I went backstage afterwards. It was late at night. Everyone was gone. I saw her standing in the distance. I was to meet her and then we would go the dressing room and record an interview. All the other times she had been so living up her nickname of "Bubbles", always bubbly.

This time, she just looked at me and she said, "I am just too exhausted and I've got to get up at 4:30 in the morning to fly back to the hospital where my husband is, and I just can't do this interview."

Now she always was full of vitality and she moved quickly, all that, but she turned around, walked away across the stage to the back door and out. You would never have known it was Beverly Sills.

**JE:** Being real human at that point, wasn't she?

**ED:** Yes. The only time that she was really being that human. Otherwise, she was everybody's friend, full of fun and vitality.

## Chapter 16 — 4:35
## Aaron Copland

**John Erling:** Let's pick one other name: Aaron Copland, Itzhak Perlman, Leontyne Price, Doc Severinsen, Peter Nero—any of those have a story?

**Ed Dumit:** I could give you a story on all of them but let's start with Aaron Copland. TU did something that they had never done before in the music department. They were going to have a seminar, I guess you would call it, in electronic music. Bill McKee was in charge of

this. Bill died recently. He was the head of the music school at that time. This was when Copland was about 80 years old and we were surprised that Aaron Copland registered to come to that because he had never been known for writing electronic music but it turns out that he wanted to come to hear what it's all about.

We had composers from three continents coming in. It was a three-day weekend. Since Copland really was coming just to listen and not participate, TU wanted to do something to focus on his being there. He had recently won the Academy Award for the score of "The Heiress" with Olivia de Havilland and Montgomery Clift.

In the Student Activities building, on a Friday night, they were going to show the film and if Copland was there, maybe he would say something. I was emceeing and I was asked to give some notes in advance of the film related to what it's like to score a movie but I was talking with him and I said, "It's a shame that I can't have you come up to the microphone and say something." He said, "Well, I'll chat with you for a few minutes."

I ended up tossing my remarks out. He came up to the speaker's stand before we started the film and I interviewed him for about ten minutes, I would say, about what it's like to score a movie. He was very interesting. I didn't get to use all my research but we had the man himself.

Then the lights started dimming. He and I were walking back to where we were seated and he whispered in my ear, "I've seen this movie many times. Let's go have dinner." I immediately got Bill McKee and I said, "Copland wants to go eat." Bill got one of the math professors who was also participating in this music event and the four of us sneaked out of the auditorium after the movie had begun. I don't think anybody noticed it. Bill took us all out to Shadow Mountain Inn, beautiful view. The four of us walked in and Jan Burtzell, who was a graduate of TU and was a wonderful organist, was playing music. He told me later, he said, "When you guys walked in and I saw it was Aaron Copland, I almost dropped dead because I was going to play the organ for Copland at dinner."

Well, we went on in and sat. We knew that we had less than two hours before the lights would come up again on the movie. He was a great raconteur, bon vivant, all of that. He was 80 years old and during the first hour of our dinner, he told a hilarious story of his meeting with Stravinsky in Paris and we laughed because it was genuinely funny.

Then, during the second hour, suddenly he told the same story word for word, so we all politely laughed hilariously as if we had never heard it before. Everything else was normal. We got him back to school in time and he greeted some people, then we drove him to where he was staying. After he got out of the car, we were all talking about this odd repetition. We knew that something was wrong and then ten years later, he died of Alzheimer's.

**JE:** Would that have been in the 1980s that he was here?

**ED:** He died around 1990.

**JE:** Probably in the 1980s.
**ED:** It would have been in the 1980s, yes.
**JE:** Shadow Mountain Inn was up on the hill on—
**ED:** 61st and Third.
**JE:** 61st and Sheridan.
**ED:** We had a delightful dinner with Copland.
**JE:** Wow.
**ED:** We also saw the first signs of Alzheimer's.
**JE:** You probably had never even been exposed to that before.
**ED:** No.
**JE:** Now we are. We know so much about it today or we know of what it does.

## Chapter 17 — 3:18
## More Interviews

**John Erling:** Peter Nero, Doc Severinsen, Agnes de Mille, do they bring a story to you?
**Ed Dumit:** The Agnes de Mille interview was over the telephone from her apartment. She was sitting in wheelchair, she said. This was very late in her life and she did a charming interview. I just regret that, of course, during most of those days we were recording on reel-to-reel and the station did not have a large budget. As a result, many of my most interviews were erased so we could use them over again. I have a few but not many.
**JE:** Arthur Fiedler. He was the orchestra leader, Arthur Fiedler, who became so famous. Is there a story with him?
**ED:** He was very cordial and very gracious. He had had a luncheon with the Women's Association during the day and the interview was done in the main office in Terrell Hall at the music building. He was seated in a high back chair. We just had a very nice conversation for about 20 minutes. I had been told earlier that he probably would not want to be talking for very long but this went on for about 20 to 25 minutes.

He was guest conductor for the orchestra. It was not one of the best concerts because he and Pierre Monteux, the French conductor, were accustomed to working with the greatest orchestras in the world. They didn't do as much with the local orchestra in molding interpretation and so on, because I think they just expected that other orchestras automatically can do this by themselves. If you're one of the top ten orchestras in the country paying big big salaries, the orchestra's just not quite on the same level.

Then there are the special people like Itzhak Perlman. He is very carefully cared for every minute. He doesn't want to waste his time. He's very congenial, very friendly, but I was told that I could have him for five minutes and this would be while he was in his dressing room. Nan Boulanger took me to the dressing room. At that time I was recording on mini-discs, tiny discs, on a mini-disc recorder. I sat down and he immediately said, "I've got one just like that and there's one thing I can't do on it." I thought, "Gee, gosh, I don't have time to waste right now."

Then I showed him how to do this particular thing. By then I thought I only have two and a half minutes left to interview him, but I went ahead and started. I could hear some light taps on the door before I had really gotten very far. I went ahead a did a five minute interview but after being told that I can't be in there more than five minutes, I was there almost ten minutes. I think Nan was a little upset because she didn't want to upset Itzhak Perlman but I was there at his invitation suddenly, and I was teaching him how to operate his new toy.

## Chapter 18 — 4:00
## OK Mozart

**John Erling:** At OK Mozart in Bartlesville, you had a whole week of wonderful classical music, and then you would provide the narration for this, but you didn't do it live. Tell us how that worked.

**Ed Dumit:** For 15 years, we recorded all of the concerts at the OK Mozart Festival, from their second season on to 15 years later. We recorded all of the nature orchestral concerts, as well as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, so all of that, we took back to Tulsa and then would recreate the experiences as if these were the live concerts with the crowd noise, the applause, the cheering. It was just remarkable.

The plan I used was very much the same as what we were using here in Tulsa with the Tulsa Philharmonic Orchestra. I could go on the dress rehearsal night, which was always the day before the concert, usually, and John Jack, who was my principal engineer and employee of the staff at the PAC, would be involved in setting up the microphones on the stage before I would get there. I would sit right next to him during the dress rehearsal. I would keep a timing of the entire rehearsal so that I knew the timings and the pieces. I also would have a chance to see what special problems were involved for that concert.

The next night, at the actual concert, I would be right there, and he would start taping the concert itself about 15 minutes before it was to begin so we would have plenty of

ambient crowd noise that could be used under my introduction of the whole concert. I would start keeping timing from the moment he started the recording device, so that I had exactly how many minutes and seconds there were until the entrance of the maestro. Then how long it was before the first note of the music, and then the same at the end of the piece. We would continue recording everything, so I had an exact timing of the interludes between movements, the interludes between major selections on the first half and the same for the second half.

Then I would take all of this back to the control rooms at KWGS, working there with my engineer who first was Lloyd Dreiheim. Most of the engineering during the years for these recreations was with Frank Christel. Frank would be in the control room, I would be opposite him in the announcing studio. He would start the recording of the broadcast playing, as he also was starting the tape that was recording the recording of the concert and of me. With my stopwatch and my notes, I could time out everything, and of course I had a headset on hearing the crowd noise. That helped me because I could tell when it was simmering down.

I had been there at the concert itself taking all these notes. As a result, I knew why suddenly there was an outburst, an especially loud bit of applause, or why suddenly everything had gotten quiet, or any emergency that had come up. I would speak about it as if it were just happening at that moment, and it matched the background sound. About the only thing that we changed in using that particular routine was that if there were long pauses beyond what would be the norm for between movements of a symphony, we would sometimes shorten the pause. But we always had a pause between movements long enough to establish the fact that this was not just a continuing montage of music.

## Chapter 19 — 2:56
## Broadcast Grads

**John Erling:** By the way, were there any names that came through TU and through your classes that went on to national fame and fortune?

**Ed Dumit:** Well, yes. As Ben Henneke always pointed out, we are proud of all of our students. There are certain ones who have hit it big, such as Mary Kay Place. Oddly enough, I had Mary Kay Place and Gailard Sartain, he was Sarten back then, now it's Sartain, in the same radio production class. Both of them went on to national reputations. Mary Kay is still coming out in movies from time to time. She's never been getting star billing, but she's always right up there at the top of the supporting cast. She's had some wonderful roles.

The interesting thing is that she and this other writer, who were friends of the Clintons, President Clinton, the two of them wrote a bunch of *All in the Family* scripts. Also, there was a series that May Kay starred in.

**JE:** Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman.

**ED:** Yes. She had quite a reputation from doing that comedy series. She has hit it as an actress and as a writer both. She is still out there doing both.

Then, let's see...Jim Hartz was co-host of the *Today Show* for two years. Do you know how he was discovered?

**JE:** No.

**ED:** While he was still at TU as a pre-med major, he was going to be a doctor, he was hired by KOTV to do news. This is absolutely true. You think these things don't happen. He was doing a newscast and one of the executives from NBC was changing planes in Tulsa. It's hard to believe, but he was in his motel room and happened to switch to the news broadcast and there was Jim Hartz. In almost no time, NBC took Jim to New York. For his first year or two he was doing local news in New York City. He was on NBC News, but on the NBC local station. Then suddenly he was elevated to being co-host with Barbara Walters. She stayed on a little longer before she spread her career out.

**JE:** Did Bob Brown come through?

**ED:** Bob Brown was a graduate of TU, but he was not in any of my classes. He was already at KRMG announcing early in—I don't know if he actually was hired when he was still a senior in high school, but it was soon after if it wasn't in high school. There's an example of somebody who has made it big. There are more.

## Chapter 20 — 7:25
## In Reflection

**John Erling:** As you look back on your life of performance in so many areas, on stage and radio and teaching, do any of them stand out as bringing you the most pleasure? How would you talk about that?

**Ed Dumit:** At the time I was deciding to change majors, I had no idea what was ahead. Then suddenly I was teaching. That pretty much shaped the rest of my life. As I look back now on all those years at TU teaching but at the same time getting to do some broadcasting myself, I just feel I've had the best of all possible worlds. It seems to me that staying here in Tulsa was definitely the right thing for me to do. Everything I have done in my life I think has been for the best.

**JE:** Do you think as we talk about your life and reflect on it, how it all really started with your mother taking you to elocution classes when you were five years old?

**ED:** That was the first step.

**JE:** Probably you would have gravitated toward acting of some sort anyway or maybe-

**ED:** That was my inclination. My parents weren't very sympathetic with the idea of being an actor in Hollywood or anywhere else, for that matter, because there was an element there of license that my religious family would not have tolerated, and I wouldn't fit in. If I had gone to Hollywood or New York, I would not have fit in with the general milieu, as they say. That's why I'm reconciled to the fact that I did exactly what was right for me here in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**JE:** As we will think about you and as we remember Ed Dumit, we'll always remember that beautiful voice of yours.

**ED:** As Queen Victoria said, too kind, too kind.

**JE:** How would you like to be remembered?

**ED:** As an advocate of the arts. Just a few months ago, I was inducted into the Honorary Women's Music Fraternity that every year gives an award to what they call A Friend of the Arts. I have always advocated the arts. I like to think that I have been a friend. There are a couple of other announcers in town who did a small number of classical concert broadcasts years ago, but I'm the only one who has specialized in that type of thing. I don't know what the music scene on the air would be like in Tulsa if I had not come along with this special interest, so I would like to be known as a friend of the arts. I am not a great singer, and I don't play the piano publicly for anyone.

**JE:** We can't finish this without saying- You talk about friends of the arts. A friend of yours and your former boss was Dr. Ben Henneke.

**ED:** Yes.

**JE:** You and I interviewed him, and that's heard elsewhere on this website, Dr. Ben Graf Henneke. A little reflection on him because he certainly gave you a huge break.

**ED:** Definitely. When you asked me to join you in questioning him, he was in a wheelchair and on oxygen. I thought, well, this interview, if we really get through it, will be about a half hour at the most. As you well know, he talked for three hours, wasn't it?

**JE:** Almost three hours.

**ED:** With a couple of stops just long enough for the nurse to adjust his oxygen. He was 95 years old. He died a month and a half later. If you had not initiated that interview, we wouldn't have that wonderful three hours of reminiscences. His mind was so sharp. I envy him that very much. He remembers conversations from Bill Skelly and

other people when he was starting KWGS. He was able to quote word-for-word conversations. He did so much for his students. That's something else you were asking me about, which ones have become famous.

Sometimes when I would talk too much about the ones who were famous, he would remind me that we, of course, have many other students who have done very well in other branches of broadcasting as managers, as news directors, all over the country. This is quite true; they're just not nationally known names, but they've done well. During the time I was there at KWGS, we were sending announcers to almost all of the Tulsa stations. Every station had a student from KWGS. There again, the local stations aren't as likely to hire very young people like that.

**JE:** Richard Dowdell was a newsman.

**ED:** Dowdell has done very well. He was hired very quickly by KRMG and was on the news staff for 40 years, more. He's certainly a well-known name in Tulsa. Scooter Seagraves. Scooter was very bright, but he didn't want people to know how bright he was and still is. I'm still in touch with him. He has had a good career as a regional announcer. I remember in the announcing class, when we were doing disc jockey stuff, they were using all the clichés. One day, I said, "I'm going to fail you on this assignment if one of you dares to say, 'I see by the clock on the wall that it's time to go.'" The next week when Scooter Segraves was doing his assignment, I shuddered because he started to say, "I see by the clock," but he said, "on the floor that it's time to go." I had to give him an A for creativity, even with the cliché.

**JE:** Can I say, then, I see by the clock on the ceiling that it's probably time for us to go, too?

**ED:** I'm highly insulted because you haven't gone on ten hours with me. I am so grateful to you. One of my biggest recent surprises was when you called and said you wanted to interview me. My response immediately was I'm not in the same league with the other people you've interviewed for this series on the Internet.

**JE:** This whole website is about everybody's story, and you've got a great story. People are going to be fascinated to listen to it. They don't know all of it; they now know. I want to thank you for what you've done for the arts, what you've done for broadcasting. It's fun to hear your voice still today on KWGS.

**ED:** It's kind of fading, but at 82 I still occasionally do some commercials and some special programs.

**JE:** Thank you, Ed. I appreciate this very much. It was fun.

**ED:** Thank you. As they say on the network, thank you for having me.

**Chapter 21 — 0:33**
**Conclusion**

**Announcer:** (music) This oral history presentation is made possible through the support of our generous 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.