Nancy & Ted Kachel

Authors, Educators, and Community Health Advocates

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Announcer: Voices of Oklahoma interviewed Nancy and Ted Kachel because their careers significantly impacted Tulsa. They were asked to write an introduction to their story. It is being read as written.

We are Ted and Nancy, two lives entwined by shared ambition and curiosity. Our paths first crossed at Iowa University, where we married in 1961 and set out together on a journey that took us from New York to San Francisco, Ann Arbor, Bogota, Tulsa, and beyond.

Along the way, we built careers in higher education of campus ministry and teaching religious studies, in social services with runaway kids and reproductive services, and in advocacy for psychedelic mysticism and healing domestic abuse, adopted three wonderful children from Bogota, Colombia, and devoted ourselves to church and community.

Through every move and milestone, we found in each other the missing pieces that made us whole. At every turn, we became the moving parts to click in place in each other's lives, pushing forward together in this adventure of life and love. Our motto braves "We've only just begun!"

Listen to their story on the podcast and website of VoicesOfOklahoma.com.

Chapter 2 – 11:20
Nancy's Family

John Erling (JE): Today's date is May 14, 2025, and my name is John Erling. Let me just say at the outset here that we have never done this before, interviewed a couple. Each with very distinctive and different careers. They could easily interview separately but thought it would be fun and yes, even entertaining to have both of you, Nancy and Ted, here at the table together. So since ladies go first, Nancy, would you state your full name, your date of birth, and your present age?

Nancy Kachel (NK): I'm Nancy Jean Kachel. I was born May 4th, 1940.

JE: And your present age?

NK: 85.

JE: 85 and just celebrating a birthday.

NK: Yes.

JE: Right. So Nancy, I know you're a little sensitive maybe about the sound of your voice. What led to this condition in the first place?

NK: I have no idea.

JE: I mean, and so that eventually you couldn't even use your vocal cords.

NK: Yeah, well, and I did therapy -- therapy, you know, practice, practice -- I just quit talking. I couldn't, I mean nobody could hear me. I was grateful that I've had two procedures now. The next step in about a month is a permanent one. This one is probably more like Botox, but it's not Botox. It's a fluffy kind of thing that pushes them together. The final one is permanent. The doctor said, "We don't do this for everybody because they are not gonna live that long," and I'm going, "Who's making that decision?" But I'm grateful for it because I can at least talk.

JE: So the man over here is your husband Ted. Ted, give us your full name, your date of birth, and your present age.

Ted Kachel (TK): My full name is Arthur Theodore Kachel. I was born on July 7th, 1937. Presently, what, 87, just about six weeks away from 88.

JE: OK, and you're feeling healthy enough to reach 88.

TK: Well, you know, one should never presume on this, but yes, I am feeling rather vigorous. I never thought I would see the 80s. It's just amazing to me.

JE: OK, so Nancy, let's start with you. Where were you born?

NK: I was born in Davenport, Iowa.

JE: Give us your mother's name, maiden name, where she was born and raised.

NK: Alberta Schneckloth. Actually it's Alberta Ceceil Schneckloth, and she was born in Iowa in a little town named McCausland of 200 people.

JE: And then your father's name.

NK: My father's Dan Leslie Stevens, and he was born in Geneseo, Illinois, just across the river from Iowa.

JE: All right, now let's talk about them. And they lived on a farm—kind of go through that story.

NK: From my parents on? Okay. My parents got married. They were very poor. My dad had one cow and $10. They were really like migrant workers that picked strawberries or whatever was in season at that point. The neighbors thought they weren't gonna live, that they had so little to eat. I was born 11 months later, and they had to sell eggs to buy baby food for me. It was a really rough time for about two years until a bank said, "Look, Les"—that was who everybody knew him as—the bank said, "We'll loan you some money to rent a piece of property and give you enough for 10 cows." So they did that. For four years they lived on that piece of property. The bank said, "Done a great job, haven't missed a payment. We'll help you buy a farm," and that was a 600-acre farm that had actually been lost by his father to bankruptcy.

His father was a very wealthy man periodically. He loved horses, he loved horse races, and he also built the first dragline. And he didn't copyright it or whatever you do.

JE: Dragline—what's that?

NK: It's like a crane, but you drag it along dredging. They dredged the Genocial Canal, and his father would call Grandma on the other side of the Mississippi and say, "I need for Les, my dad, to bring 20 horses across the Mississippi at night. I'll meet him on the other side at 2 o'clock in the morning." My dad was 14. He had trained all those horses off the range from Colorado or wherever. Amazing—we wouldn't even let our kids put their foot in the Mississippi at that age, but he was remarkable, and he was an amazing horseback rider. When he was 20, I think, he traveled with my uncle all around the western part of the United States, and when they needed a little money, Dad would go to a professional rodeo as a bronc rider.

The people that he finally got to know because he'd see them at various places, when he showed up they said, "OK, that's it, we're not winning anything today." He was so successful. Anyway, that's just my genes too.

JE: You should be proud of that and how strong they were. The three of us sitting around here could never have done what they did, right? I mean, those were pioneer people, weren't they?

NK: Yeah. They finally moved to the farm that the bank helped facilitate. Dad had an old truck, and they herded cattle for 15 miles to get to the new farm. He had a shepherd dog, and Mother drove the truck. My little brother, who was probably a year or two old, was tucked in behind my mother, and I was on the other side being four years old. Dad stood on the running board on the right side of the truck and would command the dog from the truck, and he didn't have to get out all the way. The neighbors were lined up on the roads watching this scene. It was an amazing thing for them.

JE: So that dog was herding these cattle, and your father could send that... I love dogs. I love those kind of stories. That is beautiful.

NK: Yeah, he didn't have to do anything except maybe snap his fingers or call out a command.

JE: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And didn't he sell their herd in a nationwide sale?

NK: My dad was really known nationwide for his herd, and he was the president of the...Hereford...

JE: Hereford Association, let's call it.

NK: And in that position, everybody in the country knew the Hereford herd, and so he put it up for sale. He sold the herd and then revealed that he had hidden 30 head of cattle. Nobody knew until this herd sale was over.

JE: And I'm going to prompt you here because you also wrote, kind of summarizing this, how they made things out of nothing, believed we did not own the earth, and that we should leave it better than we found it.

NK: That was his message to my five brothers, knowing that they would probably each be farmers or do something with the land. He was very clear

that you took care of the earth, and when you left it should be better than when you went there.

JE: Yeah, so there were six siblings and you're the only girl.

NK: I'm the oldest girl. I was my dad's favorite daughter.

JE: Well, I'm sure you did stories about those as well. That's a remarkable story you've just related here, that's for sure. Ted, do you think you can match that?

TK: Well, I can hang in there a little bit.

Chapter 3 – 5:54
Ted's Family

John Erling (JE): All right, so let's give your mother's name and where she was from.

Ted Kachel (TK): Her name was Frida Clara Kachel. She was a twin identical. Her aunt, my aunt, her sister was Theta Barra Maxwell. They both were born as Gardeners. Lamar, Missouri is the area that they came from where they were initially born. Her father, True, developed his own career as a kind of traveling salesman to Springfield, Missouri. But it was there that also her mother, my grandmother, Minta, had family of which one was one of the leading pioneer doctor surgeons named Arthur Delanore Craig, after which I'm named Arthur. Wonderful story. Briefly, why did my family never call me Arthur? Well, about 12 months before, after my mom and dad had been married, my dad's name is Virgil Kachel. In Springfield, she went in to see AD, as he was known, the doctor. And after he examined her, he said to her, "Well, Frida Clara, you're pregnant." And then 11 months later I was born. Now, either I was one of the 1st 11 month pregnancies or AD wanted his first great grandson, which is what I became.

JE: So, OK, that was your mother's side... your father now.

TK: Virgil Kachel, his middle name was Samuel, Virgil Samuel Kachel. He really was born from a pioneer family. His father and mother were homesteading

in New Mexico near a place called Portales. His father, even though they were very successful at keeping that 640 acres going and therefore it became their land. His father one day accidentally was kicked by a horse. And even though it didn't kill him, he began to worry about himself because he couldn't always think straight, and he then shot himself, leaving my little-bitty, maybe 5 ft tall grandmother named Ethel. And Ethel had 4 kids by that time, of which my father was the youngest. He had 3 older sisters. She then took those 4 kids and went to the southeast corner of Colorado where there was some other territory you could settle, settled another 640 acres, turned out to be the banker for all the pioneers in her area because she was trusted. Settled that land, sold it, went back to Springfield, Missouri to be with her, where the Kachel family was along with the Gardeners and the Craigs. All of those were in Springville at the time. She only survived another 3 years because she was killed in the smallpox epidemic, leaving the 4 children as orphans, and they were taken in by another part of the Katchel family.

JE: This is your grandmother?

TK: My grandmother Ethel. I finally have a picture of her. Lovely looking woman but was obviously a real pioneer woman. She knew how to do it and did it.

JE: All right. And then, so then your father.

TK: He grew up in Springfield, Missouri being raised by an uncle who was a Church of God minister, was a rough time for the four young orphans. Particularly as my uncle, the preacher, his wife was a very tough old lady, and therefore Dad always talked about the fact that they, the four orphans, were always the second table to be fed. First table was the family that had adopted them as orphans. So he grew up with a kind of tough thing. Finally, as he was becoming of age, his four sisters had all fled, gotten married, and one of them asked him to come to Ohio, Aunt Lucy, and live with her and her family, and that really became Dad's growing up. By the time he hit high school, however, he came back to Missouri. A little town called Nevada, Missouri, which is where I will grow up, and Dad, his eldest sister Aunt Allline took him in and raised him through high school, and it was in high school in Nevada, Missouri that my dad and mom met, Frida Clara and Virgil met, and I was born later in Springfield because they went

back for the birth to make sure. That AD Craig, the doctor, could see to my birth.

JE: Were you an only child?

TK: I was an only child -- still am, as far as I know. (Laughing)

JE: (Laughing) Yeah. We don't have time to check the records right now.

Chapter 4 – 10:53
Education

John Erling (JE): So Nancy, then, where did you grow up and begin to attend school?

Nancy Kachel (NK): Well, the farm that was rented by the bank and my family was near a small town called Princeton, and when they migrated they migrated closer to a little town called McCausland, and that's where I grew up.

JE: This is in Iowa?

NK: In Iowa, yeah. And that was a 600-acre farm and mostly swamps and great hunting, and my dad loved hunting. That's when he started his herd of cattle.

JE: So then your first grade school.

NK: Was a single building, one grade, I mean...

JE: K through 12 probably, or first grade through 12 probably. Right, right.

NK: And I think we maybe had 11 to 14 kids during the time I was there, and I graduated from that little school.

JE: Graduated high school?

NK: Graduated grade school.

JE: Oh, and then on to high school. Where was that?

NK: In Iowa. My dad had gone there. That was the way the land was separated, divided to identify areas for these little schools around the state.

JE: How big was that high school? How many?

NK: Well, the class I graduated in I think was 74.

JE: What year did you graduate from high school?

NK: 1958.

JE: Then did you go on to college from there?

NK: Yes, I did. I went to Iowa University, University of Iowa.

JE: And you graduated with what?

NK: I did not graduate from Iowa. I got married.

JE: To this man sitting over here.

NK: Three years after. I left—at the end of three years—went to New York with Ted.

JE: Well, let's catch up then with Ted and his education. So Ted, then, what grade school and what town were you in?

Ted Kachel (TK): Nevada, Missouri—in other words, the place where my father and my mother had met in high school. Years later, 20 years later, I would graduate from that same high school in 1955. What happened was World War II intervened and my dad, who had been trained by that time in his sister's shoemaking shop as a shoemaker and upholsterer, found that he could get a job working in the Navy Yard in Charleston, South Carolina. They were recruiting all over the place for people who could work with canvas and do things with leather. The Navy needed it. So we moved in 1941 to Charleston, South Carolina, and would stay there throughout the war, not returning to Nevada, Missouri until I was in the third grade. I then continued my schooling there up through high school and, as I say, graduated from the same high school my parents had met in, but 20 years later.

JE: I'm thinking of Pearl Harbor Day, December 7th, 1941. You remember that day?

TK: I do remember it, even though I was just a kid, and the reason was my parents by that time had become very active in helping found a new Southern Baptist church in the federal project—big brick buildings that had been built for all the workers to be brought in to work in that navy yard. They were having a great Sunday afternoon after church down on the beach, and that's the reason I remember it so clearly. All of a sudden someone on the beach yelled, "Hey, we've been attacked!" and they all rushed over to listen on the radio in one of the cars. As a little kid, of course I was in the midst of all this wondering what was going on. I'm not sure I fully understood, but I could tell the adults got serious very quickly. Later, of course, it would be explained to me that we had been attacked by the Japanese at a place out in the middle of the ocean called Pearl Harbor.

JE: So you graduate from high school, what year?

TK: '55.

JE: And then you're on to...?

TK: Actually my first year in college was spent in Springfield, Missouri because I had family there. The doctor and his family were still there, but my grandmother also was there. It was a great year for me to get to know her better, particularly my grandmother—we went to church together and spent a lot of time together. But it was a slender year also. My parents didn't really have much money to help me. Fortunately at that time, the university there was called Southwest Missouri State College, and it was free, essentially, if you were a Missouri resident. I had a great experience because some of the youngest professors were people who had returned from the war, gotten their degrees on the GI Bill, and so it was a very exciting year for me in lots of ways. I got involved in the theater for the first time, did several roles, understudied Curly, and then finally...

JE: In Oklahoma?

TK: No, no. Oh, in "Oklahoma!", yes.

JE: Curly in "Oklahoma!", right.

TK: I was his understudy, and then the following summer I played Jimmy in a play that we toured to Joplin—big times.

But it was after that I saw this article in Life magazine about the Baylor Theater and what was going on there in terms of what was initially experienced as the three-sided Hamlet. Burgess Meredith and Charles Laughton had gotten to know the professor Paul Baker during World War II. After the war was settled in Europe, he became the head of the USO Entertainment and met all these actors and performers, so they came to help him establish a nationally recognized theater company at Baylor University. That attracted me, and so the next year—my grandmother funding the tuition to a private school now—I went to Baylor University, which I would graduate from three years later in 1959 in theater, but also in theological and religious studies.

JE: Were you ever intending to be a minister?

TK: At that time I certainly wasn't, no. It was only later in graduate school in Iowa where Nancy and I met, which was 1959 to 1961. I was one of the six National Defense Fellows in theater that had been picked in the whole country, and we were getting an absolutely free ride if we wanted to, at the Pentagon's expense, all the way through a PhD program. I did the first two years and took my master's degree because I was then offered another fellowship by the Rockefeller Brothers, who were looking to find new blood for the ministry. So I said, OK. They offered me a trial year—I could go to any seminary I wanted. Because by this time my fascination and love of theater was strong, I picked Union Seminary in New York City. So about six weeks after we were married in August of 1961, we found ourselves at Union Seminary in a dormitory for married couples.

JE: The urge to act—was that in high school? Did that come about there? Were you performing then?

TK: Yes, in the sense that I did some of my first things, but the interesting thing in my mind anyway is my dad actually had had such a good experience when he was in high school acting in plays with a young teacher that was very helpful to them. I can remember him telling me, "Ted, the most fun I ever had was acting in A Midsummer Night's Dream in high school." I believe he played one of the mechanicals, one of the crazy guys, and he was the one that had the moon lantern. He would tell me that story again and again, and that's what really drew me into acting in high school. I just did a couple of roles there, but when I moved to Springfield, I had already begun at 14 being a staff radio announcer, and

that also encouraged my sense of presenting myself by voice, being present in that sense.

JE: So you inherited this from your father.

TK: I really did.

JE: But you also got encouragement from him as well, and you can really owe him a lot for that and many other things as well, I'm sure.

Chapter 5 – 12:00
Marriage

John Erling (JE): Nancy, you were too young for Pearl Harbor to remember.

Nancy Kachel (NK): I was a very small child, but I remember the excitement. My mother, who I have not talked about, grew up in a family of eight children—a very German family. They stopped speaking German because they were terrified of what would happen if somebody found out. So I was aware that there was this other language, but I was four years old.

My mother was the fifth or sixth child in order. They had no money. Grandpa was a farmer and a junk dealer and whatever he could do. My mother and her closest sister would share shoes—one would go to school one day wearing the shoes, and then they'd trade off the next day. They were very poor. My grandmother, when my mother was probably 16 or 18, died of cancer and left three children with no mother. My mother became the mother, and I think she made it through eighth grade, but she couldn't go any further.

So my mother's never known anything but work and raising kids. She loved children, so it was a gift in that sense. Very generous woman—she'd do anything for anybody. A real pillar of the church. My dad and mom really almost owned the church. As they grew older, they probably gave money to keep it going. Mother always felt self-conscious about the fact that she didn't even have a high school graduation. She wasn't 18, she was more like 14 when she had to become a mother.

JE: Look how wealthy she was in other areas.

NK: Oh yes.

JE: She was great, and both of you drew a strong work ethic from both sides of your families and all.

NK: Oh, we both are so grateful for our families.

Ted Kachel (TK): Yes. You know, that is so important as we have grown older and made a family of our own, to realize what a gift both of our original families were—not because they had a whole lot of resources, but because they were just such good basic human beings.

JE: And it took both of you probably years to look back and realize that—because I'm saying that about myself. Then we look back and realize what we were given as examples, right? Let me then take you to 1961 when you were married. All right. How did you two meet? Who's gonna start?

NK: Well, I was actually at the university before this dude, and so I was engaged in a Methodist Wesley Foundation. I had spent a lot of time there, and Ted was Southern Baptist. When he came, he got involved in the Wesley program—probably because it was more liberal—at the University...

JE: University of ...

NK: Iowa.

JE: ... of Iowa.

TK: In Iowa City, that's what it was. But let me tell you the other side of this story so you get the real picture. She's right, I was coming in as a grad student, so I arrived a year later. She'd been there a year. When I went to church—it was at an American Baptist church, a nice community church that I found easily early on—and one Sunday morning I was sitting there that fall and all of a sudden our service was disrupted by this group marching down the center aisle.

They were representing CORE, the Congress for Racial Equality, and they were there to protest the fact that even this Baptist church was still segregated. And guess who was in the midst of that march? Wearing a dress I would later learn she had designed and built for herself, which had

a kind of ballooning cape on the back of it. They all had black armbands and marched in and sat on the front row. It was a big upset, as you can imagine, yet we recovered and went on with the church service. They stayed with us all that time, and one of their leaders was asked by the minister to speak about why they were there.

It was a good experience. On the other hand, for me it was all about seeing this incredibly attractive young woman who obviously managed to keep beauty and her sense of protest ethics together in a package. I said to one of my friends sitting next to me, "I'm gonna get to know that woman. I want to know what makes her tick."

JE: So do you recall when he came up to you?

NK: I did not in that situation, but he started going to the Wesley Foundation, and that's when we met. I mean, he's very articulate, very bright, and I thought, wow, that kind of sounds good.

JE: So how long did it take for you to say, "Well, we're interested in dating"?

NK: That was too funny. Gosh. He is a Cancer, so he always goes around and around. We were at the Methodist Foundation, the Wesley House, watching a movie or something, and there were several kids there. He said to me, "You know, there's a really good play on Saturday night. You ought to see it." So I went back to my room and thought, "Was that a request for a date?" I struggled with that, and then I thought, "I'll just get dressed in case." And he showed up.

JE: So that was your first date, seeing a play. All right, so let's move you along here. Marriage is the end goal, but how long did it take before you were married from this early inception here?

TK: Well, the bump period was around the first of the year, when I finally got around to asking her to marry me. We would be married the following summer when I had finished my MA. But I don't know, is there any part of that story you want to... please.

NK: Again, he was doing his circling. We had friends that were dating, and it was New Year's Eve and they got engaged. I told Ted the next morning when I went over to Wesley, "They just got engaged," and he said, "Oh, I was gonna ask you to marry me, but I don't want to follow suit."

JE: You don't want to be a copycat.

TK: That passed for a proposal, would you believe? Because she took me up on it.

JE: And she said yes right away?

NK: I said, "OK, I'm calling my parents."

JE: So then you were married again, the date...?

TK: August 10th, 1961. That was the beginning of 1961, the January that we're talking about.

NK: And that was the end of his schooling there.

TK: Because of my master's.

JE: All right, so then this August, how many years would you have been married?

TK: Would you believe 64?

JE: Isn't that amazing?

TK: It is 64.

JE: So then everybody asks...

NK: Well, I've always said we've been married eight times.

JE: Yes?

NK: Yes, we went through those ups and downs, that point that, well, this may be it. That's because I think both of us are so bored with the same old, same old, and we'd reached a plateau and it was going on too long. Then we would get itchy and find some other way of making it new again.

JE: Well, there's a lot in that we could unpack right there, but that's good, and you weathered the storms, in other words.

TK: She almost left me. We were doing the field research in San Francisco in the summer of 1969, and I came back—we had been fighting over something, which of course I have no way of remembering—and I found her packing her suitcase. She was saying, "I'm going back to New York,

forget it. This is just not working out." I forget what I did exactly, but I apologized some way and said, "Look, the last thing I want is to lose you. If you're going back, then I'm gonna go back. We've got to work this out." That was the closest, in my memory, that we came to really splitting the blanket, I think is one of the phrases.

JE: And look today—what a nice marriage relationship you guys have.

NK: We really do.

NK: Everybody thinks of Nancy and Ted together.

TK: Here we are, dooming the couple.

JE: Right.

Chapter 6 – 4:25
Nancy Needed to Type

John Erling (JE): So Nancy, I'm gonna track you here from 1961 to 1962. You were a teacher in New York City, Brick Presbyterian Church nursery school. So you're married at that point. Tell us about that a little bit.

Nancy Kachel (NK): Well, Ted then went to Union Theological Seminary. I went along, of course, but I couldn't go there, so I had to get a job outside. The Brick Presbyterian Church—very, very wealthy church in New York City—was looking for somebody to be a four-year-old teacher or whatever. I didn't have a degree, I didn't have any of the needed things, but the preacher, the top preacher, interviewed me and he said, "OK, you got a job." That handshake was exactly what I wanted to see.

JE: Interesting?

NK: Yes.

Ted Kachel (TK): But the other thing—wasn't it immediately after that or something? When did they send you to the clothes closet?

NK: I, of course, made all my clothes and was a little wacky, so they said, "You really need some different clothes." Well, this place had what we would call

a garage sale—a huge, huge thing. They had a gold knitted dress, solid gold knitted dress, probably $20,000, on sale. Anyway, they let me go into the used clothes closet. I had a fabulous collection of clothes from that place—wools and leathers—and I mean, I hadn't seen clothes like that.

JE: So how could you describe the clothes you were making? I'm going to use the word hippie, or were you far out? What was wrong with the clothes you were wearing?

NK: Well, it was probably skirts and... I don't know. I don't remember. Tight skirts—that was fashionable at that time, but it wasn't appropriate.

JE: You remain in New York City. You're an executive secretary to the Lever Brothers headquarters, and what is that?

NK: It's a soap company. They make all sorts of soaps, and at that time it was a big deal. Unilever was part of that—or they were part of Unilever, which was in Britain. I think I worked on the 19th floor. I had no degree at that point. I couldn't even type—I still can't type. I had to pass the test on typing, and they timed me at 13 words a minute. I said, "Well, I think I can do 55—the last time I checked." They said, "Well, you're probably just out of it, need a little prepping," and so they sent me to a school.

This guy was supposed to test me, and we sat and talked and just had a great time. Finally, he said, "I'm supposed to be testing you," so I typed—55 words a minute. He said, "Well, you were just a little rusty, you can go back and do it." I typed 14 words a minute.

JE: He wanted you to hire you so bad, right?

NK: They did. You know, they just thought I was OK.

Chapter 7 – 7:50
Runaway House

John Erling (JE): So then let's track you to, Ted, because this is '63 and '64. What was happening to you?

Ted Kachel (TK): OK, we did the first year in seminary, which would have been 1961 to 1962. I had completed my obligation for the fellowship that I had been given by the Rockefeller Brothers, but at that same time, some people from the University of Pennsylvania who had a campus ministry there came up and were interviewing students and offering them a chance to go and live in Philadelphia for a year and be an intern in campus ministry. And that sounded really cool to me. I applied and they hired me, and by—what—it was maybe in the summer sometime, we moved down to Philadelphia for the first time and we spent a year there and did campus ministry. I learned lots of stuff, but one of the other things is Nancy and I in that year began—in the basement of what was known as the Christian Association, which is where all the campus ministries were—down in the basement, we began a coffee house that we called the Catacombs. And then we also created a satirical review much like That Was the Week That Was, that was very popular at that time. And so every Friday night we would do this big satirical review and it became very popular. We would pack the coffee house every time we would do the review.

Nancy Kachel (NK): We were, in fact, illegal. It would just be stuffed with people, and he and I did Liz and Dick.

TK: Right? Remember how Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor were the Cleopatra and all that was happening? So we would do satirical versions of their movies together.

NK: They had three or four movies out at the same time, and so we'd run backstage and put on a different hat and come out and do the same words, same...

TK: Same dialogue. In other words, someone would announce that this is now The Sandpiper movie, and then here these two idiots would come back...

NK: Out. We did lots of crazy stuff. We had great...

JE: Fun. So you were an actress yourself.

NK: Oh yes. No way. Well...

JE: It was good enough to have fun.

NK: Oh, absolutely.

TK: The month in which we were after married and aiming to New York, I had a job to go to a summer camp called Green Lake for the Baptists. I cast Nancy in Jean Paul Sartre's play No Exit. She was gonna play one of the major roles in that too. So yeah, she could have done acting. It's just, she finally wandered away from that world.

JE: And we're glad you did. Because as people follow along the story, they find out what you did. I'm gonna move along here—'68 to '69, you're a social worker at Judson Church Runaway House in New York City. What's a runaway house?

NK: Well, at that time there were a lot of kids on the streets. Haight Ashbury out in California set up the first house for runaway kids. We were the second one. And I was the guiding force in that one. The church, Judson Memorial, had residence rooms where students could stay. Well, they emptied the students, and we filled it with runaway kids. And we were illegal as all get out, but we made a deal with the police that if they had a family coming to locate—whatever—that if we would be told, we could evacuate the kids before the family. Because these kids were abused. They were places in their heads there was no way they were going back home without some real help. And we did that too. We would try to put them together again.

JE: You're planting the seed for what you eventually did, maybe in that area. Because there you are, caring for children who were abused, and it carried on to other areas of your life.

NK: Well, I think that's true. It wasn't intentional. I had...

JE: Yeah, but you had the patience to do that.

NK: Oh, it was such a need. I never thought about patience. And I taught them how to do things that they could do themselves, like make jewelry. We went to hardware stores and picked out all sorts of little things that you could make earrings out of. I taught them that they could make area rugs by scraps—carpets that we would just glue together and sell it. And we did lots of things like that that could benefit them in the future.

JE: The fact that you even were creative enough to do that as well...

NK: I grew up on a farm. My dad was amazing. He could make anything.

JE: All right. And then you were in another runaway house. This was in Ann Arbor, Michigan. So Ted, why don't you come in here too. How did you end up in Ann Arbor, Michigan?

TK: Well, of course, we have this period where we are in Philadelphia. Finally, we returned and I was hired as a permanent campus minister beginning—what—that would have been '64 to '66, I think. And while we were doing that, I realized that probably I wasn't really a pastoral minister type. I could do campus ministry, loved being in the university world, working with students, and had a great time doing that. But I decided that if I was going to be in the university, I had to get a PhD. You just don't stay in the university without one. So I applied again back to Columbia, which is affiliated in academic graduate studies with Union Seminary. So I applied to their PhD program in religious studies. Particularly, I was interested in the sociology of religion. And I was accepted. And so finally by the time—what—'66, I guess, I went back. Began to commute to New York City, even though we had purchased our first house and were living in Philadelphia. I'd go back and forth. A good buddy of mine traveled with me all the time. He was involved in organizing Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam, the big protest movement. So that was going on at the same time, and we were involved in that both in Philly and in New York and other ways.

Chapter 8 – 8:06
Timothy Leary

Ted Kachel (TK): So it was through doing that commuting again to get the PhD program that we got up to the place where I needed to do the field work. My committee said, yes, we want to have the first person to go out and actually study the use of hallucinogenic drugs amongst young people and others in the San Francisco area. And we agreed to do it. And so we went out there.

John Erling (JE): I'm sure people listening to this—the hallucinogenic drugs are catching everybody's ears. Did you have to sample it to do a good research project?

TK: We did. That in fact was recommended by one of the leading researchers at Harvard, who had done a very famous research by the name of Dr. Walter Pahnke. He was a psychiatrist, and he said, "Ted, you gotta have this experience or you'll never understand why people are doing it." He had led a group of Harvard divinity students through an experience earlier, about two years earlier. So anyway, we said OK, we'll try and find some way to do it, and sure enough we found a way—a guide who would procure the LSD drug, which was what we had asked for, and guide us. We were going to be in his apartment place in Sausalito, California, for the experience—this all-day experience. He said, "You know, you won't be able to do anything else for the day." And so Nancy and I both dropped about, oh, I don't know, 9 o'clock in the morning. And we were still there coming down from the drug at midnight, really, and then we stayed overnight. They asked us just to stay there, and so we did not go back to where we were living across the bay at Berkeley in one of the seminary apartments that we had managed to procure for that time period.

JE: So Nancy, did you wonder what this guy has gotten me into—if my parents only knew? And OK, we probably don't have time to delve into all of that, but what did it do to your mind?

Nancy Kachel (NK): The last part, or...

JE: The LSD. This trip.

NK: Well, I had been around kids doing drugs for two or so years when I was taking care of these kids, so I was very familiar with them. I hadn't done LSD. I maybe smoked a joint once or twice, but I knew. I mean, and I think that's part of why Ted did this study—he was aware of the stuff, learning from... we were learning together in many instances. So that didn't bother me at all. I don't know if you heard my Leary story, but in the midst of all this, when Ted was doing his back and forth to Sausalito and I was in New York, he was trying to find Leary out there.

TK: I had an introduction to Leary from Pahnke. Timothy—yeah, Timothy Leary.

NK: Yeah.

TK: Pahnke had been involved with Leary. Leary had been one of his professors at Harvard.

NK: Ted called me from out west and said, "Leary is not out here." I said, "Well, I'm coming out. We'll figure something out." So I got on the plane—right in front of me was Timothy Leary. So I went, "Dr. Leary, my husband is out on the West Coast wanting to get together with you." He probably thought he was a narc or something. So I told him of our common person that we knew. He said, "Oh, well, let's get a seat together," and he starts moving people around so we could sit together. And of course, he was signing autographs all part of the way, but for six hours we had a chance to spend time together. Neat guy.

JE: And he was jealous when he found out that you got to fly.

NK: Leary said to me when we were getting off the plane, he said, "Just tell him I'm your traveling companion." He sat with me. Ted was late. He sat with me for 30 minutes, and he said, "Finally, I guess I should go home." So he left and he came back in 10 minutes with the newspaper so I'd be sure to have something to do.

JE: So real quick, you should say who Timothy Leary was, why he was so famous.

TK: Well, Timothy Leary, of course, was the leading proponent in the '60s—by this time, moving into the '70s—of the idea that psychedelic drugs and the psychedelic drug experience would manifest your mind in such ways either for therapeutic success or even spiritual growth. And that was what he was now preaching, in the sense that he would hold these public meetings and give out that experience. We had all these introductions to him from Pahnke and some of the others at Harvard who had been involved with Leary when he and Alpert were first doing some of their prison experiments. That was where the contact had been made. So by the time Nancy got there and I was stuck in Portland and then came down, he then said, "Well, look, call me." That is, he told Nancy, "Call me, and you can come out." He said, "I have this place we live in—Berkeley—and you can come out and spend time with us." And we did that the next day or two.

NK: It was the next day.

TK: Had a great time. He was very generous with his time, etc. Do you want to tell the radio story?

NK: Yeah, sure. We were sitting on the balcony—just a nice, wonderful discussion and location—and he got a phone call. He went in and answered, and he came out and he said, "I've got to do a thing on the radio. You can come in or you can stay out here." And of course we were gonna go in. So we went in. He had this mattress on the floor we sat on and listened to him. And at that point, he became manic. He became the person that you would see on television. But that was just his show thing—I mean, his way of relating to the masses.

TK: It was an act.

NK: It was an act, yeah. And we saw it. And as soon as he finished the radio interview, then he came back and we sat down and had breakfast, as I recall. It was pretty much—or maybe it was lunch—but anyway.

Chapter 9 – 8:05
The Farm

Ted Kachel (TK): He was very generous, trying to help me understand what I needed to do to do the field research. And he was the one who recommended—he said, move around until you find a young group that seems to be using these drugs, and get their permission to spend time with them. And that was what I did. I ended up focusing my research on, actually, a fellow who had been a professor or kind of teaching assistant at San Francisco State by the name of Stephen Gaskin. And Gaskin had begun to gather a religious community around him successfully—it would continue. And that was the community we followed.

They would come finally to visit us when we took our position in Ann Arbor in the fall of 1970. They continued in a caravan of 28 buses across the United States, back to San Francisco, and then decided and came back to Summertown, Tennessee, and settled there. Their continuing community exists there, and they're simply called The Farm, which is what Stephen named them. And even though he has passed on—that is, he passed on in, I think, I don't know, ’90, something like that, 1990—just aged out, you know. But The Farm has continued to prosper and functions as what I refer

to now as the psychedelic Amish folk, because they simplified. They're vegans in terms of their diet, but they have created certain kinds of businesses. They even have a publishing firm.

John Erling (JE): You did this research, you experienced it, and so then you had to write a conclusion. What was your assessment?

TK: Well, the hypothesis that I had established to do the field research on was: can you find a community coming out of the height of the hallucinogenic experience that you would qualify, in all sociological senses, as a religious movement or religious community? And so I had gone back and done the research throughout the histories of religion, because these drugs do reappear in various—really geographically widespread—in many religions, but usually always in the earlier moments. And so I was asking the question that my professors were also interested in: do we have one now? And if so, will they continue to use the drug when they become fully organized as a religious community?

And it was just sheer luck that the year I happened to be studying them, they went through that transition. Where essentially, his teachings—he would hold these meetings and do teachings—all about all the ways they were changed in their life. And even though they referenced the psychedelic experience as a mystical experience in their view, by the time they settled in The Farm, he had decided it was not good for them to continue using either peyote or LSD, psilocybin—any of those. Instead, they grew grass and would smoke marijuana. But that was the extent to which their drug usage continued at that time.

So my hypothesis was demonstrated in that—in the substance of that one year of field research. I was delighted as a researcher, but totally surprised that it had happened that quickly.

JE: Are people using psychedelic drugs today?

TK: Sure. In fact, there is a renaissance going on right now. And there was almost—and this is a long story—but there was almost a group called MAPS who got the FDA to consider approving, after they had done several clinical trials just like the FDA had demanded, trying to get them to approve what is known as MDMA, which is one of the—what can you describe it as—a short-term acting psychedelic that has been very

successfully used, particularly with veterans dealing with PTSD.

The FDA turned them down this time and said, go do another clinical trial and we'll see. If they finally get it approved... but right now, none of the psychedelics have been moved off of what is known as Schedule I drugs, which says they have no medical use. There's lots and lots of work going on. My prediction is that in less than five years, it will be a standard drug in the medical community's use for certain kinds of therapeutic interventions.

JE: So it really can expand the mind. How do I say that...

TK: I mean, I can give you the neuroscience. Simple. The neuroscience that has been done suggests that what these drugs do is disrupt the default mode network you and I use to create reality—just like we are now doing, OK? And these momentarily disrupt that default mechanism that we have developed for surviving as a human species and getting through our daily activities, and gives us the chance to use the capacity of the brain to reassemble itself.

And therefore, it could have tremendous therapeutic use for people who have suffered specific traumas. But also, the idea is manifesting the mind, which is literally what the word means—psychedelic. That it could also potentially help even the neuroscience people finally understand the way the brain operates in a bigger sense, a fuller sense. But still to be proven.

JE: Should we let everybody know that we are on LSD right now?

TK: If we were, we would not be having this conversation, I assure you.

Nancy Kachel (NK): I'll just give you one thing about that. My experience was very different than his, but when I got through it, I felt like I'd been to the top of the mountain.

TK: Yeah. My LSD experience—the key takeaway for me—it lasted for hours, but the key takeaway was: I died. I literally died. And fortunately, I had done enough work to understand that that might be one of the things that would happen as an experience to me.

NK: It was his ego that died—and it rose right back up.

TK: But that was the experience that I had, John. It is not an atypical one. Lots of people on—particularly LSD, which is the most powerful of them, and which is what I had that day.

Chapter 10 – 12:03
Move to Tulsa

John Erling (JE): OK, let's track Nancy because then you're following along with her, of course. Ann Arbor, you were in the real estate business from ’77 to ’81...

Nancy Kachel (NK): If I can interrupt...

JE: Yes! You may.

NK: When Ted was going back and forth from Philadelphia to New York, I worked for a bank. I had no idea it was a mafia bank, but I was there for a few months and one of the guys told me that the president was mafia and he had killed somebody. So the bank protected him, and he had his minions around to take care of him. So anyway, I was benefits administrator in that place. And we needed a new car, and we didn't have any money. So I went down to the finance person—who would become a friend—and I said, “Do you have any recommendations for a car that I might buy?” And he said, “Well, give me a couple of days.” He called me back and he said, “I have an American Ambassador with 1,600 miles on it, and I could sell that to you for $1,600.” And I’m going, “And what's in the trunk?” It was clearly part of their scheme. They were always very nice, however. Chief guy died, I guess, and there was a migration of all the people that were taking care of him.

The other part of that is, we lived in a house—a row house—and we were the end of the row. And there was a 10-foot chain link fence where we could get our car into the yard. And the next door was...

Ted Kachel (TK): It was all jukeboxes and pinball machines.

NK: And they would park their car in front of my gate. And I'd come home and I'd have to get them to move it. And every day I'd have to go back and see

them, and they would be in the back corner of the building playing poker. And I'd have to go back. The guys on the dock loved it, and they'd go, “You go, girl!” But one day I said, “Would you move your Cadillac—black Cadillac?” And without looking at me, one of them said, “Would you like one?”

JE: And you...

NK: I said, “Thank you, no, but please move it.”

JE: I don't know if this is a time to say, how in the world did you ever come to Tulsa, Oklahoma or not, but I want to get there—we got to do that. So let's talk about that. Maybe, Ted, you can tell us what you were doing.

TK: Well, what happened essentially is, after that time that we had in Ann Arbor—the five-year period—there was a brief time we went to Earlham College. I was head of the Soc department, taught there for two years. Didn't work out for us. We just didn't fit into that Quaker community, so we went back and I taught in engineering humanities at Michigan again. And that was a wonderful experience. But after that, I had finished everything on the PhD and essentially defended it in 1974 and received my degree in January of 1975. So I was ready then to try and find a teaching appointment in a philosophy and religion department.

And that’s what essentially happened by 1979. But again, the family was still in Ann Arbor, and we were commuting back and forth. By this time, by the way, we had been to Columbia, adopted two young kids. Nancy had her hands full—not only with real estate—but she was trying to raise these kids.

NK: We had the third one by then.

TK: Right, we ended up with three. But the last one was 12 years old when she came to us. Nancy, you can explain that if you wish. But anyway, I was offered a teaching appointment—that is, I was—at the University of Northern Iowa in philosophy and religion. So that's how we moved the family over there. And it was there up through 1984 as I was teaching. Then again, I saw this fellowship offer that came through from NEH that said there’s a theater company in Tulsa that’s looking for a scholar-in-residence to work with them. Well, that was a perfect combination for me—theater and scholarship. And so I applied, and they hired me, and we came down.

Got here—I think it was right around, right after Christmas in ’84. And I began working for the American Theater Company for the next two years here in Tulsa.

JE: OK. American Theater Company brought you here, right? All right. And Nancy, were you ready for that move? I mean, what were you doing when he gets this?

NK: Well, I was working for a building company in Michigan, and I was their marketing person. You know, I worked there for what, three or four years? And so I just quit the job. But I had—during that time—the market in Tulsa was skyrocketing. So we came down here, my boss and I, and looked around and, you know, we said, “Oh, it’s not a fun place. It’s so segregated.” And where we wanted to build, we couldn’t sell to diverse populations. We just couldn’t. What they would do is tell people that they had just sold that house—all that crap. And so I had a very bad taste of Tulsa. We didn’t come down at that point.

But later, when he saw this thing and said, “We need to move to Tulsa,” I’m going, “Dear God.” And, um, Tulsa has been very good to me.

JE: Yes, right. Let's give you a credit here. I'm gonna back up here because you were a professional potter—ceramics. You produced and sold pottery, taught classes. I mean, you had that creative side to you as well.

TK: That was her Ann Arbor other thing that she was doing.

JE: But you adapted to Tulsa immediately and enjoyed—with the theater company—the work you were doing. A little more about that?

TK: Well, essentially, as I suggested, it gave me a chance to put—you might say—both sides of my professional life together for the first time. And what I enjoyed doing was more of the writing. For the first time, writing about theater in a situation where I was commenting on performances we were preparing and doing. Like, I remember the first one I wrote about—they were just doing when I arrived—The Diary of Anne Frank. And so it gave me, for the first time, a chance to do some research about the Holocaust and what was going on, and then write a little essay about that.

And so that was kind of my fundamental job. Every time they would pick and do a play, I would write an essay about it that we would put in a

companion reader, essentially, that went along. So I did that all the way through. And so that was a great experience. I did a little bit of directing—less successful—but I had a great time producing a production: a modern dress version of Sophocles' Oedipus the King that the American Theater Company did.

So that continued for the two years. And then the grant essentially ran out. By that time, however, Nancy had established her professional life, beginning with DIVIS—the Domestic Intervention Service—which she can talk about. But I had written one essay defending the American resident theater groups. They're doing A Christmas Carol every holiday season, and many had criticized the resident theater movement for doing what they thought was just a moneymaker. "Why do this?" And I wrote an essay—and it finally got published in the national theater magazine—called Christmas Carol: Is It More Than Just Money?

And what I was trying to show them was that it really was part of two things. One, it saved the celebration of Christmas. That is, when Charles Dickens writes A Christmas Carol, mostly by that time, people didn't make much of Christmas celebration. The Puritans particularly thought it was unseemly to do that. And he was trying to show that it could be—what shall I say—theologically ennobling, if you understood his version of the story. So I took that and said, look, he saved Christmas when he wrote it for the first time, and now we continue to use it as a ritualized way to remind people that there's more going on at Christmas than just giving each other presents.

JE: Who are some of the other people at the American Theater Company that people might remember their names?

TK: Greg Roach was one of the leading actors. Oh, Melanie Fry. They did a version—another person that comes immediately to mind, of course, is Bob Odle. And they did a version that just usually broke everybody up, which was their kind of summer satire about Tulsa life or Oklahoma. It was called The Joyce Martel Revue, and it was hysterical. And they had so much fun doing that. Karl Krause still—they still do A Christmas Carol, I think, every year around the holiday season. And Karl has been doing Scrooge now for years, I think.

JE: Nice to know that Tulsa was a community that had such a respected place, not only here but apparently nationally too. You were introduced to it from—right?

TK: Yes, I was.

Chapter 11 – 3:48
DVIS

John Erling (JE): Let's bring you then into your work here, Nancy, as Ted just talked about the Domestic Violence Intervention Services. How did you become executive director?

Nancy Kachel (NK): It was funny. I was going to try to find a job when I came down. I waited a while, and when Ted came down to interview, he said, "Oh, they're very excited down there to have another woman coming—a feminist." And I thought, oh great. So I came down. I applied for a job—volunteer management—for the business, and they didn't want me. And I thought, oh, that's fine.

And then the exec came up and I thought, well, what the heck, I can apply for that too. So I got that job. And I thought, boy, doesn't take much to get a job as an exec. Anyway, I had a great time. I should tell you—the first morning, one of the staff came in and handed me her resignation. And I thought, well, OK. Then one came in and said, "You've got to deal with the police. They're not helping us at all." Well, OK. And then the courthouse called and said, "If you don't get this straightened out up here, we're gonna have to do away with this program." And I thought, could you give me till noon?

You know, the list was long. I knew it was going to be a challenge, and it was. And it was great.

JE: What was their concern?

NK: The police would just ignore it and lump it into, you know, just a regular stop, so nobody knew what was going on really.

JE: And what were you doing? What was the service that you were providing?

NK: Protection for women and children. And they had a house that had the number of roaches equal to the population of New York City. We were housing 35 women and children every night in a five-bedroom house. And so that's when we knew we had to get out of there. That's when we built the shelter—the first one.

JE: The men who were involved in these lives would find the house and try to come to it and come in?

NK: Yeah. Oh, that—oh yeah.

JE: That would happen a lot?

NK: Yeah. The security in the first house was a basket of baseball bats. I wanted to do everything—I wanted to experience all that stuff. So they said, "Well, why don't you stay overnight tonight? Experience what it's like." Well, it was an awful night. And the phone was ringing constantly. The next day they said, "Well, that's because it was a full moon." And it did—and I mean, it frequently did.

Chapter 12 – 11:23
Planned Parenthood

JE: You know, I admire the fact that you stayed there for 3 years. You continued that work.

Nancy Kachel (NK): Well, I probably would have been there longer, but Nancy and Ray Feldman talked me into it. They met—we were at a party at their house. I had heard that she wanted me to apply for Planned Parenthood. So Ted and I were kind of the last ones out, and they wanted to tell us, persuade us. And Ted and I walked out about one o'clock, and he said, "Well, what do you think?" And I said, "You know, I'm really happy where I am," and he said, "Would you just shut up and think about it?"

John Erling (JE): Think the way he thought.

NK: Well, Nancy sent me that stack of stuff to read, and I read through it and I said, "I could do that job." So I did apply.

JE: So Nancy, I guess in 1988 then you become President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma. Your role to begin with—was that a shock? Was it an easy transition?

NK: Well, I mean, it's always interesting to find out what's happening in an organization, and I was blessed with a terrific board in both of those organizations. They were very thoughtful about the way they introduced me to the whole board and supporters. I mean, it was just a great time. I loved raising money. Ruth Nelson, who was the best fundraising person at that time—she and I would go out on a call together. And she said, "You know, I've worked with many people in fundraising," and she said, "You're the best." That was like—wow.

JE: And who was that?

NK: Ruth Nelson.

JE: Ruth Nelson, yes.

NK: She was incredible at raising money.

JE: She was the sister of George Kaiser, right? She was good at it.

NK: Oh, yeah.

JE: And so were you then. Now that wasn't easy, probably, to raise money for Planned Parenthood.

NK: Actually, we went to people who believed in it, you know. And there were a lot of people. Some didn't want their name on it, and that's fine. It's different in the way you have to approach it and protect people and so on. But I think the exciting part of that was building new programs. We were the first one in the country—there were about, when I came, about 160 affiliates across the country—we were the first ones to introduce prenatal care.

And everybody said, "We're reproductive health—what are we doing?" Having babies is reproductive. But it took a lot of talking with the national office to get them to support us. We finally were delivering 1,800 babies a

year in Medicaid services. And they had managed care come to town, and managed care didn't want to touch us—we were too expensive. So we had to get rid of the managed care crap first. But we did that. We broadened even services for women. And then we started male services. We did full male services. It wasn't just one thing like diseases—we did that too, of course—but that was pretty exciting.

What I was doing was moving the affiliate toward primary care. And I did that for two reasons. It was necessary care for people. And the other thing was—the whole country, not just Planned Parenthood—but the whole medical system was going to primary care. And I knew once that hit, the person is blocked from going to a specialty service for their care. So it was a twofold kind of reason to put that in.

When we started delivering, women would come back to us and say, "There's nobody to take care of my baby." And I said, "Well, that's kind of dumb. We shouldn't let that happen." So we started pediatrics. Got a lot of flack from the national office. But when I resigned and I was talking with one of them after I left, he said, "You did the right thing. You were the first one to see what was happening, and how the rest of the country was losing out because they couldn't take that person as a full client."

JE: You said you had 1,800 deliveries. And often, Planned Parenthood is attached to abortion. And they hear that word, and they think abortion immediately. Wouldn't that be true for many?

NK: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

And so then—I mean, it was difficult. There was public controversy about this, political opposition, and you had to speak out in defense of abortion and why it was necessary in some cases. Talk to me about how that went for you.

NK: First of all, reproductive services started by Planned Parenthood as a separate entity. So that was one way that we were a bright light, because we could say, "Go to Reproductive Services." And that group took a lot of the flack from us. It made it easier for a lot of people to come to our clinics because they weren't associated. And the ones that needed an abortion would go there.

People picketed every week. Occasionally, we'd have a woman call us—who was a picketer—and say, "Would you let me come in early and leave after the picketers leave? I want an abortion." And she'd be back on the line marching the next week. I mean, that didn't happen always, but... and I'd go, what's that about? Well, I can say it's about abuse at home—that if the partner knew, it would be an abusive thing. And the other one is—she knows what's best for her, and she knows what's best for you. And there's probably six other reasons. But anyway.

And then we got that guy who busted their clinic up, and finally did ours too by throwing glass with something that caught fire and threw it into the building.

JE: And you were in the building?

NK: No, I wasn't. And nobody was. But it happened like three times. And one of our staff—he called. The guy that did it was like fifteen. He called and said, "Well, I bombed the place. And next time I'm gonna do you people," or something like that. And she said, "Well, do you know what we do here?" So she explained it to him. And he said, "Oh, well, I didn't know you did all that." And she said, "Yeah. Do you want to come visit sometime? I'll take you on a tour." And he said, "I'd really like that."

JE: What did you say his age was?

NK: Probably fifteen

JE: Fifteen?!

NK: ... or sixteen. He couldn't drive. He rode his bike there. But his mother and father had the bombs from previous war or something. You know, they helped him.

JE: So then, it'd be interesting if he told them he took a tour—and maybe he changed his mind about everything. We don't know. So have we—is there anything else before we move on from this issue that you want to make a comment on?

NK: Well, you know, I mean, there were times in Planned Parenthood where the windows would get shot out, or the alarm would ring in the middle of the night, and I'd have to go down and see what was going on and call the

police. And I'm pretty fearless about things. So one night the police wanted to go through the building, and they wanted me to see if anything was missing. And so I led the dogs in. Finally I'm saying, "Wait a minute, I shouldn't be in there." It's mostly show, you know—they come out to protest, they get the news out there, and then they go home.

JE: They just want to make some headlines.

NK: Yeah, that's one block of people. The others are violent—knocking things over and so on.

Chapter 13 – 4:12
TCC

John Erling (JE): You must have admired her. You heard her talk about the domestic violence, and then this particular job, and you knew that she was qualified and could do it. You were very supportive of it, I would imagine.

Ted Kachel (TK): Yes. Nancy... I really felt the reason I didn't push for me to apply for jobs at other theater companies—which was one of the possibilities after the two years here with American Theater Company—I felt it was really her time, her chance. She had gotten the DVIS back on its feet, had worked out relationships with the police, got to know Drew Diamond at that time, and that was fun, yeah. Made a great change in the way the police were doing that. And I just knew that if she took over Planned Parenthood—which was in between directors at that time, kind of trying to figure out what they were gonna do in Tulsa—I thought she would bring the kind of creative spirit and ideas that would get them to expand their services and be able to do something with Planned Parenthood that hadn't happened here in Tulsa.

By that time I figured, I'll find something here academically or otherwise and work out a way to continue my professional career. I wanted her to take on this larger challenge of Planned Parenthood, and that's the way it really worked out. It took me about six months after she took that job before a friend of mine who was teaching at Tulsa Community College came to me and said, "Hey, a humanities position is gonna be open," and I

think it was January of the next year. He said, “Would you like for me to put your name in?” and I said, “Sure, I'm looking for work and I can certainly do the humanities given my PhD.”

And sure enough, TCC called me in and interviewed me and said, “Yeah, you fit really nice.” So I started teaching down at Metro in Humanities. And then when Dean VanTrease lost his theater person, he came to me and said, “Look, I’ve read that you were here at the American Theater Company, and I’ve looked at your resume. You have all this theater in your background. Would you take the theater program on?”

I said, “Well, why now?” And he said, “Well, I think we're getting ready to build a new performing arts center, and I need somebody who knows theater if we're gonna try and do that.” And I said, “Oh, OK.” So I began, and we were initially producing plays in the downtown Tulsa Performing Arts Center.

But two years later, sure enough, Dean had gotten the ball rolling, and the new performing arts center that would be built on the Southwest Campus—I was gonna be there. So I became the transitional figure, at least for the theater program, to move its life out there. I ran that program until 1999, and that’s when I told him, “You need to get somebody else. I’ve done this long enough,” and decided I would retire.

JE: Forty years in college teaching and administration.

TK: Yeah.

JE: Right. And that's a beautiful facility out there. Dean VanTrease—I’ve interviewed him. Ray and Nancy Feldman are also on our website, and we have their stories as well. I always talk about Dean VanTrease because when they brought the concept of a community college—or a junior college—from Dallas to here, nobody had heard about that concept. And he had to sell the idea to this community because everybody thought… well, they were kind of snobbish about it. They had to have a four-year college. And Oral Roberts was actually a big proponent and helped Dean VanTrease sell that to the community.

Nancy Kachel (NK): Interesting.

TK: Super!

Chapter 14 – 8:47
Adoption

Ted Kachel (TK): One of the big adventures was when we were adopting the children from Bogotá, Colombia. I could only go down for five weeks, and that was important because we were working out the legal issues and how you got things done in Colombia for the first two kids we adopted. But she ended up having to stay—because of the way the rules were in Colombia at that time—for almost 12 weeks, and that was quite an adventure. She then came back from that and became part of the crew in Ann Arbor, Michigan, that were Colombian-American friends, which was this inter-country adoption agency that we set up at that time. Nancy was one of their primary people to help others figure out if they really wanted to adopt a Colombian child at that time.

That was how we got our third child—Nancy working with the agency down in Colombia and then saying, “We're worried about this woman. She's 12 now, and if we don't get her adopted…” It was a broken adoption, is the reason they called. But that's how we got our third child. All I'm saying is, that piece of work she did in Ann Arbor during that time period, too, for about four or five years, was very important. I think we ended up placing—didn’t we say at one time it was about 500?

Nancy Kachel (NK): No, I think it was closer to 300. But a bunch. We ran the whole place for finding children homes—not doing the opposite, which is finding children for families. It's a very different thing.

John Erling (JE): But you lived in Colombia—and why?

TK: Well, it took—

NK: That long to get them out.

TK: Yeah.

JE: Oh, and you were introduced to that Colombian adoption agency in Ann Arbor?

NK: So, we started with one couple that were with the university. He was a teacher. They went on a sabbatical. The wife visited all the orphanages and began to get involved with that, and they adopted the first child. There was no program at that point. They came back, and Ted and I and another couple started the foundation.

JE: Oh, you started the adoption—

TK: And—

NK: We were the first ones to—

TK: Yeah, then we became the guinea pigs. That is, we went down and actually adopted. Yes. That was because we knew we needed to figure out what was really going to happen down there.

NK: No, we did that because the dog died—and there we go. Ted baptized the two kids that came back. Before we started the program, he said, "You know, I think we ought to adopt." We weren't going to have children. We were happy—I was happy.

TK: Yeah, we were eleven years into marriage before we did our first adoption. But yes, John, I guess all I was trying to say is that Nancy was at the heart of that. Once we got it founded, she was one of the two or three women that did the actual work with families. And then the FANA—which was the name of the agency in Bogotá that we worked with—as they got abandoned children, we would help them do placements. That's why she said the thing about our view—we would find families after there were abandoned children. We weren't trying to be primarily seen as... you know, there could be other agencies that do the other. We were not opposed to families looking for children, but we said this other piece is missing—where there are actually abandoned children who need families. And that's why we set up Colombian American Friends.

JE: So then you've adopted three children. How old are they now?

NK: Well, the oldest one—who was 12—is almost 60. The other two are... 50? We don't know their ages—we made them up. They're probably about 51. I don't know. But one was found in a cardboard box in front of the

orphanage—that was one of our daughters. And our son was found probably in a rooming house. He was left there, and he cried and cried and cried. She went into the room and saw him by himself, and she wanted to take care of him, and then realized she really couldn't. So she took him to an orphanage. But he would've died. They both would have died if we hadn't done that.

JE: So you saved lives, too. Did you have challenges in raising them here?

NK: Oh my God.

JE: It was OK?

NK: Yeah. The oldest one—we had no idea the damage that had been done to her. She can't read, can't write still. We've done everything imaginable to help with that. But my colleague in the service called me that day and said, "We've got this young girl who needs a home." And she said, "I've worked on it all day, and I cannot find a family that will take her." And I said, "Do you have pictures of her?" And she said, "Yeah." So she brought over the carousel with slides, and I set them up on the kitchen counter.

Then Ted came home, and I said, "Honey, do you want to see our new daughter?" And I agree—he came over and looked at the pictures and said, "Yeah, great." We spent more time choosing a carpet.

JE: Right. "Yeah, I'll take her." Are they living here in Tulsa?

TK: They all are. All three are. Daniel, our son, is a Le Cordon Bleu-trained chef and has been living and working here in various restaurants. He's now a manager for the TIGHT athletic facility over on the west side of the river down that way and runs their food services, essentially, for them.

JE: The other two?

TK: They're both here. Samantha, our youngest daughter... actually, they're about 52 or 53 now. The eldest, I think she'll turn 60 this year. But as Nancy says, I mean, the agency didn't have any birth certificates on any of these kids, so it was all guessing how old they were.

Rosa is here, lives with her husband Steve—a guy from Tulsa. And we have

a grandson. Rosa had a son, and he's still here. He has a partner, Nicole. So we have a family in Tulsa.

JE: Right. And they're certainly aware of how you rescued them?

TK: Oh yes. Yeah. Yeah

Chapter 15 – 6:56
Chautauqua

John Erling (JE): But since you're an actor, you got involved in Chautauqua.

Ted Kachel (TK): Yes.

JE: Tell us what Chautauqua is.

TK: OK. Chautauqua is a summertime, humanities-supported program that tries to bring history alive by asking scholar-performers—this combination of a person's ability to present in a first-person characterization—a historical figure from the past. Mostly, we've done characters from American history. Usually what happens is five of us accept invitations from various cities or places around a theme. The first one I got involved in was called the American Progressive Era. The character I created for my first Chautauqua, here in Tulsa in the summer of 1992, was William Jennings Bryan, the famous orator who literally ran for president unsuccessfully three times.

That's the kind of thing. I've been fortunate—I've done almost seven different characters now, and even a few for a futurist out on the East Coast who needed some other characters that I didn't perform in the local Chautauqua. We've been running an Oklahoma Chautauqua now since '92, and it's still going on. It's usually done in four cities—three for sure every summer—and usually there's a fourth tacked on. That group of five actors, performers, travel to each one and spend a week there doing workshops and then evening performances.

The neat thing about Chautauqua, from my viewpoint, is you not only present the character in person and then answer questions in

character—you really have to know the person's life, what they were concerned about, and the issues they were articulating in their time—but then you step out of character for the final 15 minutes or so. The audience can then ask you questions as a scholar-performer: What did you really think about this person? So the interesting thing for me is the last one I did, two summers ago, was in a Chautauqua themed "The '60s: Surviving," and I portrayed Timothy Leary.

JE: Did you do some LSD to do that?

TK: No, this time I didn't use the sacred substances, as we refer to them. I just did it on my own.

JE: Yes. But you also did Sir Winston Churchill, William Shakespeare, H.G. Wells, Generals Robert E. Lee and William Tecumseh Sherman, as well as Frank Lloyd Wright—who had a presence in our own city, as a matter of fact—and P.T. Barnum, and Thomas Edison. OK, I suppose the question would be, which one was your favorite?

TK: It's always like asking a parent which one of your children is your favorite, right? What happens, I think, for most of us is every time we're working—we usually have about a year to prepare—we get so involved with that one and so committed to making them come alive again for people that it becomes our favorite. If I had to pick, OK, it has to be William Shakespeare. Because of my love of theater, the chance to get to pretend to be the Bard and carry that character forward was probably—if not the favorite—certainly one of my favorite Chautauqua experiences.

JE: In your classroom experience, were you able to teach about any of these people? And did your Chautauqua experience help you in that—or vice versa?

TK: Both. You're right. I taught not only theater and those kinds of things, but I taught humanities in a way that began in the ancient Middle East with the Greeks and Hebrews—talking about the parallel traditions that have informed European, Western, and American society. In doing that, I had many of those characters, like you mentioned—Sir Winston Churchill, Shakespeare. We did the Civil War twice, so I could play both sides: General Robert E. Lee and then William Tecumseh Sherman.

So when you go into the classroom, sure, you not only know their lives in

some detail, but you also have a way of pointing to things in their lives. Sometimes I would even enact a portion of a person's life so that my class got a real sense of it. As Nancy can tell you, one time we were at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center and a man—a lawyer—came walking over and said, "Dr. Kachel, I'm so glad to see you. I just wanted you to know your humanities course changed the course of my life." And I said, "Really? I hope for the better." He said, "Oh yes. I decided to work hard in school and become a lawyer. I don't think I would've done it without your course."

JE: Isn't that great to hear? Those students were in your class, and all of a sudden, you're talking about Winston Churchill, and then pretty soon you became Winston Churchill.

TK: Yes. It was just great. It was fun.

NK: I never knew who I was living with when he was getting close to performing. In the last week, it was like, "Who are you today?"

JE: That's good.

Chapter 16 – 9:22
Novels

John Erling (JE): But that—as much as we talked about you guys and your great careers—you also have written mysteries.

Ted Kachel (TK): Yes!

JE: More than one?

TK: Two now, and we're working on—

JE: The third. All right. The Farmer's Daughter Mysteries by Nancy and Ted Kachel. Now how did this come about?

Nancy Kachel (NK): Well, we changed the title, by the way, but Ted and I were sitting on our balcony having a drink one summer night. And Ted said, "I don't know what I want right now." I had just come home from Iowa and visited the old farm, and there was a river that went by the farm. I just had

this vision—not really, but it was a vision—of a guy floating down the river on his back with his arms sticking straight up. Obviously, rigor mortis had set in. And I thought, boy, that would be a nice mystery story kind of thing. So I went back and I wrote 17 pages and gave it up. I told Ted about it that night and he said, "Well, let's do it together." And I thought, "You and I have never done a damn thing. I'm afraid we'd kill each other." He said, "Well, let's try it." And we had the most fun. Probably that is the single thing I can say that was so joyous for me. And so one night when he was invited out to Lawton to a fundraiser—

TK: Yeah, you're talking about when I was invited out to do General Sherman for a collection of military people who were associated with the university in Lawton. They had heard about this guy who does generals and thought it would be great fun to have Sherman come out.

NK: So I brought that up because it's another thing that we did together. I said, "I'm not gonna go with you. You go in with the blue uniform. I'm gonna go as Vinnie Ream," who was his traveling companion. And she was a very famous sculptress at that time. In fact, there's a piece in the Capitol. But she always worked in her bloomers. And that's all I had to know. And I was being photographed and talked about—bloomers—

TK: She costumed. And so yeah, it was just—

NK: Wild. Back to the book. We really got into it, and we're so different about everything. I mean, he's a word person, and I'm a visual person. And it really worked out well. He did some of the stories about what the characters got themselves into, and I would talk about the farm and the blah blah. And then I would mash them and create the—

JE: You did the final manuscript then?

TK: No, we did the manuscript—I mean, we would go back and forth, rewriting, rewriting. By the time we were through, I think both of us said it would be hard to pick out what was really one of us. She's pointing to us because of my theater background, I tended to write scenes where dialogue and people were involved that way, whereas she would fill in—not on landscape just in the sense of scenery and settings for which the action was happening in—but what she would do is connect a lot of the story. She would find the connecting pieces that would move from one scene to

another, the action. Not just description—it wasn't that. So we both were creating story. It would be my way of saying, "Okay."

JE: But then you blended it all together, is that true? Right. And so you wrote it together. And so you've already done two, and you're working on another one?

TK: Yeah. Now we refer to the series as The Irregular SEAL Team. It still begins and is set around this big farm in Iowa—that's where all these people have met. But one of them was a retired SEAL who's come to live on and work on the farm, and—

NK: He came because he lost—he was a commander at the highest level—and he lost the love of his life when she took a bullet for him. She saw the red blot—well, it just about killed him.

JE: Okay, this is in the world of your imagination. We should be saying this right now.

TK: Oh, of course.

NK: Right.

TK: Right. This was the mystery—the first one.

NK: So he went to the farm to heal and finds the farm pretty exciting.

JE: So is it known then as The Farmer's Daughter Mysteries? Did you change the name?

NK: The Irregular SEAL Team—we changed it to that.

JE: So the series is—

TK: The Irregular SEAL Team Mysteries.

JE: Okay. All right. So can you buy them on Amazon?

TK: You can. And the way to really get there, though, is to use either one of our names and just ask, because that will take you to it—so far anyway. We've also used—I mean, that's the series title—but we have individual titles for the mysteries. So it's the easiest just to use the author's name.

JE: Well, what a journey we've been on here for two and a half hours today. It's been most interesting. Both of you would have advice to young people that are coming along that are listening to this, because teachers have been using this as resource material, and they actually make assignments to Voices of Oklahoma. You have a chance to speak to them right now. So Nancy, do you have any advice for young people?

NK: I think it's great for young people to learn from us old people, but they need to do their own thing. They need to do what meets their needs and what they feel good about. And that may connect with some of us—I hope they learn from some of the things we've done. Follow your dream, work at it, and find spaces for doing what you want to do.

JE: Ted?

TK: Very similar, but my way of putting it is: write your own story. Don't let anybody else become the author. They can be enablers, they can be helpers—certainly your parents, if you're fortunate as we were, give you that boost to get you going. But finally, what you have to do is find your own story—your narrative for your particular life—drawing into it whatever other people are important to you as you go along your way. But author your own story. You're the only one who can do it, so do it with a lot of gusto.

JE: Ted, how would you like to be remembered?

TK: I think what I want to be remembered mainly as is a person who inspired other people to live great lives.

JE: Nancy?

NK: Well, I think I would like to be remembered as a person who helped other people and who loved other people. And my favorite thing is hugs. Just go out there and find a bunch of them.

JE: Well, I just sit here on behalf of the whole city of Tulsa. I'm going to assume that mantle of saying thank you for the involvement you made in so many areas of this life of this community. Both of you inspired individuals, changed lives, helped people. And you can't say that to every couple. It's either one or the other. But here is a couple—you both have done this.

Hear, hear. And so we just say thank you, and thank you for sharing the story. I enjoyed listening to you.

NK: Thank you.

TK: We appreciate the opportunity that you've given us to tell our story.

JE: All right.