

Transcription of Video History Interview with

PEGGY FOUKE WORTZ

February 10, 1999

Erickson: Peggy, would you begin, please, by telling us where you were born and a little about your family?

Fouke Wortz: I was born at Grandma and Grandpa Olds' summer home on Grosse Ile, way at the end of the island as the Detroit River goes into Lake Erie.

Erickson: Oh, at their summer home.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. Auntie Bun called it the Italian Palace, and it was very elegant.

Erickson: Really. How many rooms?

Fouke Wortz: Hmm, that I don't remember, but ...

Erickson: It was huge probably.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, it was. It was really lovely. It had a lovely atrium with a swimming pool, and it was a beautiful home. On the grounds around it, Grandpa had a nine hole golf course, and a sizeable boathouse for his yacht, and a house for his secretary.

Erickson: She lived right on the property?

Fouke Wortz: He.

Erickson: Oh, a male secretary.

Fouke Wortz: Outside the gate, the farmer had his home. Part of it was farmed, and the rest was in gardens, formal gardens.

Erickson: Oh, how lovely. How many acres?

Fouke Wortz: (Shaking her head no). Jim (Wortz) probably knows. I don't.

Erickson: Now are you the oldest?

Fouke Wortz: No, I'm next to oldest. My brother is older than I.

Erickson: Was he also born there?

Fouke Wortz: No, he was born at Mother's and Bruce's home in Lansing.

Erickson: Well, would you talk a little about ... (pause) What did your father do?

Fouke Wortz: Well when I was born, he was fighting the First World War on the Mexican border—Pancho Villa.

Erickson: Oh, ok.

Fouke Wortz: And then when he came back, in the bank, Grandpa's bank, ...

Erickson: Oh, Grandpa also owned a bank?

Fouke Wortz: Grandpa owned the bank, and signed the bills. Can you believe it? I have one check left.

Erickson: Oh, great. Did you frame it or something?

Fouke Wortz: I gave it to my daughter.

Erickson: Uh huh.

Fouke Wortz: And then my father, about the age of forty, went into the hotel business—the Hotel Olds, naturally. He became so interested in hotels that he acquired three more on his own and ultimately was President of the American Hotel Association.

Erickson: Um hmm. And then tell us about your grandfather, too.

Fouke Wortz: There's so much to tell about.

Erickson: I'm sure.

Fouke Wortz: Grandpa. (pause) He retired at the age of forty in 1904 and then developed REO, which are his initials (REO).

Erickson: Oh, but this is after he retired?

Fouke Wortz: After he retired. He invented quite a few things. He never slowed down.

Erickson: Really.

Fouke Wortz: In 1929, Grandpa and Grandma and Mother and Father and Olds and I took a cruise to Norway. Nobody went to Norway in those days, and we went to Iceland for my birthday.

Erickson: Now did you go in his yacht?

Fouke Wortz: No, we went on the S. S. Calgarie. But Grandpa, all the time we were on the boat, at night worked over the plans for the Olds Tower which he built when we got home.

Erickson: He built that in Lansing?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, that's right next to the Hotel Olds.

Erickson: Was Lansing the center of the automotive industry before Detroit? Is that how it went?

Fouke Wortz: Well, if Grandpa hadn't gone down to Detroit when he did, it was considered that Lansing would have been the center. But Detroit being on the River, the steel could come in and the coal and everything that they needed.

Erickson: Sure. Sure.

Fouke Wortz: But after Grandpa's plant burned in Detroit, he came back to Lansing.

Erickson: Oh. What did he have in Lansing? Did he also have a plant there and also one in Detroit?

Fouke Wortz: Well, he built one in Detroit where they made curved dashes. But after that he came back to Lansing and built the plant. And then he sold his interest in Oldsmobile.

Erickson: He designed that curved dash, and I wanted you to mention that because that was really ...

Fouke Wortz: He designed the curved dash. Henry Ford did not. And I rode in one. I toured last summer—a year ago last summer—.

Erickson: That was a wonderful celebration, wasn't it?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, it was the Centennial.

Erickson: Well, talk a little about Henry Ford if you will.

Fouke Wortz: Well, I really don't know much about Henry Ford. I met him several times.

Erickson: But he was just a visitor in your home?

Fouke Wortz: Well, that's true. I do know that Clara and Grandma used to do their sewing together in the evening.

Erickson: Clara is Mrs. Ford?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. When the men were going over blueprints.

Erickson: Were they in business together in some way?

Fouke Wortz: No.

Erickson: They were just talking things over.

Fouke Wortz: That's where Henry got a lot of ideas, from Grandpa.

Erickson: But your grandfather had established the Oldsmobile first?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes.

Erickson: And then Henry Ford came out with his car later?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, Grandpa developed a steam car in 1887 or around then, but he knew that wasn't the answer.

Erickson: Really.

Fouke Wortz: He thought a gasoline engine was a little more reliable. He would go take his cars out on a trial run at 4:00 in the morning.

Erickson: (laughter)

Fouke Wortz: Well, he didn't want to disturb the Milkman's horse.

(laughter)

Erickson: That would have bothered the horse, the engine would.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. They did make a noise then.

Erickson: How interesting. Did your father ever decide to be involved in that business after he and your mother were married?

Fouke Wortz: Grandpa and Bruce were ultimately ...

Erickson: Bruce is your father?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. When I turned thirteen, he said, "Now you can call me Bruce." He wanted me to.

(laughter)

Fouke Wortz: They had Lansing Oldsmobile which was the biggest retail dealership in the world.

Erickson: Your grandfather did?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, my grandfather and my father.

Erickson: Oh, ok.

Fouke Wortz: And my parents were divorced.

Erickson: Oh, I see. So they were in business together?

Fouke Wortz: It was a friendly divorce.

Erickson: It must have been.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, uh huh. And at the time that Phil and I were married, the wedding was at Mother's house. But Bruce was there and gave me away. The reception was down at the Hotel Olds.

Erickson: Oh, how nice. Was it a lovely, formal affair?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes, very.

(laughter)

Erickson: Well, tell us about it.

Fouke Wortz: Well, it was a big wedding. I really wanted to elope, and Phil said, "No." I would hurt too many feelings.

Erickson: Um hmm.

Fouke Wortz: I guess he was right. So it was very nice. It really was. We had the minister come out from New York. He was an old friend of the family. We had to have the wedding at 3:30 in

Fouke Wortz: the afternoon, because he had to catch the “Wolverine” back to New York for the next day’s sermon.

Erickson: Oh dear. You kept him busy. Busy weekend.

(laughter)

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: Did you have guests coming in from all around?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, we did.

Erickson: Did they stay at the Hotel Olds?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, they stayed at the Hotel Olds, yes.

Erickson: And you were married inside the home. Or was it outside?

Fouke Wortz: No, I was married in Mother’s living room. And as mother used to say, it was a beautiful wedding. Everybody cried. Mother cried because she could have gotten another hundred people in the room.

(laughter)

Erickson: Did she plan it all?

Fouke Wortz: Beg pardon?

Erickson: Did your mother plan a lot of the wedding?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. My brother said that Peggy got married and Mother had a wedding.

(laughter)

Erickson: Oh gosh. It sounds wonderful. How many attendants did you have?

Fouke Wortz: Just one.

Erickson: Oh.

Fouke Wortz: Just one.

Erickson: Did you have a big dinner? Was that typical to have a big dinner after the wedding?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes, at the hotel.

Erickson: Oh, at the hotel.

Fouke Wortz: A very big dinner. Yes, it was a very big wedding—almost as big as yours, Jan. (Referring to the Erickson wedding Peggy had attended a couple of months prior).

Erickson: Oh.

Fouke Wortz: That was a beautiful affair.

Erickson: Thank you. How did you and Phil meet?

Fouke Wortz: One of Mother's friends (pause) well, a group of them came up to visit Mother on the yacht. We were in Lake Superior, and he said oh, he knew just the right young man for me. So naturally, I went down to St. Louis and met him.

Erickson: Well, what was Phil doing in St. Louis? Is that where he had grown up?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, he had grown up in the Fouke family, and he was in the family business which was dressing and dying seal skins, Alaska seal skins.

Erickson: Um hmm.

Fouke Wortz: And then, of course, the war came along.

Erickson: Help me with the context of this, the chronology of it. Had you gone to school already? Had you graduated by the time you met Phil?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, I had, and I had gone to St Louis—you'll be amused at this—to study to be a concert pianist.

Erickson: Oh, how wonderful. When did you start with the piano?

Fouke Wortz: Where?

Erickson: When?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, when I was about six or so.

Erickson: Oh, really. That's wonderful.

Fouke Wortz: I was in St. Louis. My father's sister invited me to go back to Berlin with her for the winter. Her husband, Uncle Irwin, was Treasury Attaché in Berlin for the U.S. Government.

Erickson: You said this was about wartime, too, didn't you.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, it was before the war broke out. So I packed up my clothes, got a new trousseau and started to go over.

Erickson: You were going to go over by ship?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. We were going to go over, and I got as far as New York. The U.S. Ambassador did not go back.

Erickson: Was your uncle still there?

Fouke Wortz: He was still there.

Erickson: But the Ambassador didn't go.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, um hmm. So Mother and Bruce both came to New York and said, "No." And they were right.

Erickson: Oh sure. What was going on then? Do you remember?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, it was obvious to us what was going on, because Hitler was making great strides in amassing an army.

Erickson: Um hmm.

Fouke Wortz: We were there in '34, and it was very obvious then.

Erickson: Oh, even in '34?

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes.

Erickson: This was another trip you are talking about in '34.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: And then you didn't go back in what, '38 or '39?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. '38, I think, or '39.

Erickson: What was ... Tell us about your uncle. What happened to him?

Fouke Wortz: Well, I hate to say this, but we feel he was murdered.

Erickson: Hmm.

Fouke Wortz: He was in the U.S. and getting ready to go back to Sweden.

Erickson: He went from Germany to Sweden?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. And then he came over here, and then he was to go back to Sweden. He was at ... oh, one of those houses where they prep them, you know with everything. And we just felt he knew too much. But my aunt was never allowed to see his body after he died. The casket was sealed.

Erickson: How strange.

Fouke Wortz: That's what we thought.

Erickson: So it was never confirmed?

Fouke Wortz: Never confirmed.

Erickson: How sad. Did your aunt come to live with you then?

Fouke Wortz: She lived in New York, and she and Mother were great friends although they were sisters in law, you know. (chuckle) Well, ex sisters in law. Yes, she lived in New York, and (pause) ... I guess it was in 1942, she decided to go out to San Francisco and see a friend. Out there she met a man and married him.

Erickson: Oh good. Good. Well, I know we're skipping around a little bit, but you have so many interesting aspects to your life. Let's go back a little to your schooling. Where did you go to school?

Fouke Wortz: I went to school at Kingswood School, Cranbrook. I went there for five years.

Erickson: That was a private school?

Fouke Wortz: That was a boarding school, and I was a charter boarder there—also the youngest.

Erickson: Oh. Well, what ages did they go to and from?

Fouke Wortz: From Seventh Grade through Senior, Twelfth Grade.

Erickson: Um hmm. Did you enjoy that? Was it difficult?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, I really wanted to go away to school.

Erickson: Oh you did? Was it difficult to adjust to a boarding school?

Fouke Wortz: Well, I had moments of home sickness, but I really loved it. And I loved being on my own. I was a little independent!

(laughter)

Erickson: Who would you say you were most like in your family?
Your mother, your father, your grandparents?

Fouke Wortz: I don't know, but I was very fortunate to spend a great deal
of time with Grandma and Grandpa Olds.

Erickson: Did you?

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. I really was.

Erickson: Were they just fun to be with?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, it was wonderful. And since my parents were divorced,
it was, to me, it was home life.

Erickson: And you said your grandfather was retired, so he could
spend more time with you.

Fouke Wortz: Well, he wasn't retired. (laughter)

Erickson: What kinds of things do you remember doing with him?

Fouke Wortz: Well, in Florida we did a lot of picnicking and boating and
things like that. And of course, I had to go to school.

Erickson: How did you arrange all that?

Fouke Wortz: We took our books down. In Daytona Beach, there was a
school, private school, set up for people like us. Students
would bring their own books for the winter time, and we
each had our own assignments.

Erickson: So you would arrange something with Kingswood? Is that
it?

Fouke Wortz: No, this was before I went to Kingswood.

Erickson: This was before. Oh, ok.

Fouke Wortz: When I went to Kingswood, I just went down for spring vacations.

Erickson: But with the tutors, you would arrange with somebody in Michigan for all the assignments?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. The teachers would assign everything we had to learn, and actually the school was so good, I felt that I learned more there than I ever did at school in Michigan.

Erickson: Was it because of the individual attention?

Fouke Wortz: I think it was the one-on-one.

Erickson: What were you interested in? Do you remember?

Fouke Wortz: Beg pardon?

Erickson: What were you interested in studying?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, I was sure that I would be a writer and a dramatist. You know, all the classy things. But I could not pass sewing.

(laughter)

Erickson: You just didn't like that?

Fouke Wortz: No.

Erickson: Well, you talked about the piano, too.

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes.

Erickson: You were interested in that?

Fouke Wortz: Grandpa and Grandma had an organ in their home in Lansing, and it was a player organ—like a player piano, and we all had so much fun with it, because down the two sides

Fouke Wortz: of every roll, it had printed the stops to pull out. You know, for the tuba and the clarinet and the violin. It was wonderful.

Erickson: You had great fun with that?

Fouke Wortz: Our favorite was the “Overture” to “William Tell.”

(laughter)

Erickson: Did your brother ... did you spend a lot of time together?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, off and on.

Erickson: Well, five years is a pretty good distance.

Fouke Wortz: He was only two years older.

Erickson: Oh, he was two years older. But did he spend a lot of time with your grandparents, too?

Fouke Wortz: Well, he went off to boarding school.

Erickson: That sounds like quite a life.

(laughter)

Fouke Wortz: Yes, it was. It was wonderful.

Erickson: I'm sure. You've always liked the water, haven't you?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes. I love it, and we did a lot of cruising on the Great Lakes.

Erickson: You would spend the summers in Michigan and then winters ...

Fouke Wortz: On the Great Lakes or at the Lodge. After Grandpa sold Elbamar, he built a summer home up on Lake Charlevoix.

Erickson: That's also in Michigan?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. He built a "tiny" little lodge, seventeen bedrooms. You know, we had wonderful house parties.

Erickson: Quaint!

(laughter)

You had house parties? Is that what you said?

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes, and there'd be thirty six of us sitting down for dinner.

Erickson: Oh, my goodness.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. Jim and I are still eating off some of the china. (chuckle)

Erickson: Oh, how nice that you got that. So the dining room must have been enormous to fit in all those people.

Fouke Wortz: Oh it was. And we also have some china from the yacht. We do have our own china. But I love all the old things.

Erickson: Were dinners very formal typically?

Fouke Wortz: Not in the summertime. In the winter.

Erickson: Did you dress for dinner?

Fouke Wortz: We did at Mother's house.

Erickson: Oh, I was still thinking about your grandfather's house. But your mother also had her place?

Fouke Wortz: In Lansing.

Erickson: Did you live with her often?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, I did, I really did, and her house was really a showplace. It was beautiful, and that's where Phil and I were married.

Erickson: Oh, I'm getting my mansions mixed up.

(laughter)

When did you and Phil marry?

Fouke Wortz: In 1940.

Erickson: And then he went into the service?

Fouke Wortz: I think he was drafted. He said his father kept saying, "I could get you in as an officer." Phil said, "No. I'm going in the usual way. I know I may be cannon fodder." But he went to OCS, Officer Candidate School.

Erickson: And where was he stationed?

Fouke Wortz: He was sent over to the CBI, China, Burma, India. He was a photographic interpreter.

Erickson: And he was there for what ... three years?

Fouke Wortz: He was overseas two years plus.

Erickson: And when he came back, did you settle in St. Louis or Michigan?

Fouke Wortz: We lived in St. Louis. We had a home in St. Louis. And then he decided he did not want to go back into business with the Foukes.

Erickson: His father. And that was the fur business, you said.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, and so he found something out here.

Erickson: Before that ... I do want to get to Riverside, but I was thinking that the Depression was in that time period. You were probably just very young during the Depression ...

Fouke Wortz: The Depression was in the thirties, and I was in boarding school.

Erickson: Oh, that's right. Well, what do you remember about that time period?

Fouke Wortz: Well, I hate to say this, but the Depression didn't touch us.

Erickson: Well, that's what I wondered.

Fouke Wortz: But when the banks closed, I was really concerned. Mother and Bruce were in Mexico.

Erickson: They were still married then.

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes, they were still married then. I felt that I should economize, all the stuff in the papers, you know, everybody running out of money, and I thought we might also. So I did my laundry in my wash basin at boarding school. You know, in the little bathroom. I hung it all over. Well, it was terrible. I gave that up!

(laughter)

I didn't save much money.

Erickson: But it didn't affect you, and it didn't affect the others at the boarding school? Life just sort of went on?

Fouke Wortz: Well, it probably did, but I didn't know about it. Grandpa gave a million dollars so that the children in Lansing who had savings accounts at the public schools would be reimbursed.

Erickson: Hmm. Were you aware of people suffering quite a bit in Lansing?

Fouke Wortz: Not in Lansing as much as in New York.

Erickson: Uh huh. Did some people go to your grandfather do you think for help?

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes.

Erickson: He sounds like a very generous person.

Fouke Wortz: He was very generous. He really was. I know the Crash was in 1929, and that's when he built the Olds Tower.

Erickson: Is that a big office building? Is that what the Olds Tower is?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, one of the biggest in Lansing.

Erickson: And did he occupy that whole building?

Fouke Wortz: He had one floor, the tenth floor. And I worked there during the war.

Erickson: You did? What did you do?

Fouke Wortz: While Phil was in India.

Erickson: Oh. What did you do?

Fouke Wortz: Well, a lot of the secretaries, you know, went to the factories.

Erickson: Sure.

Fouke Wortz: So Grandpa didn't have a receptionist. So he called me over, and I had to answer the telephones. The first time I did, I said, "Hello." Grandpa said, "You're demoted!"

(laughter)

Erickson: You tried. (pause) Did you like that?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, yes.

Erickson: Where did you go to college?

Fouke Wortz: I went to Bennington, which was very liberal then and still is.

Erickson: And an all-girls school, right?

Fouke Wortz: It was then, but I understand now they have men.

Erickson: Right.

Fouke Wortz: In those days, it was only 250.

Erickson: Total?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, um hmm. And it was in Vermont, really a lovely site.

Erickson: Yes, sure. Why did you choose Bennington?

Fouke Wortz: Because you could study on your own and do what you wanted to.

Erickson: Well you said you were very independent.

(laughter)

And what did you want to study?

Fouke Wortz: Well, Peggy Hepburn and I started out together in a class. It was a combo of chemistry and physics. (pause) I hope Ray Orbach doesn't hear about this.

(laughter)

Erickson: I think he'd be impressed.

Fouke Wortz: Anyway we survived that. After that, I changed over to drama.

Erickson: You didn't like the sciences?

Fouke Wortz: No. (pause) And then during the winter season, I studied with Mme Ouspenskaya in New York.

Erickson: I'm sorry, I don't know that name.

Fouke Wortz: Hmm?

Erickson: I don't know who that is.

Fouke Wortz: Well she was from the Moscow Theatre, and anybody my age will probably recognize the name. She came over and was in a few films.

Erickson: Well what an honor for you then.

Fouke Wortz: It was! I really enjoyed it.

Erickson: Were you in some productions, Peggy?

Fouke Wortz: In Lansing I was. In their amateur theatre. But with Mme Ouspenskaya, it was a good-sized class. We studied make up and everything, and I went to as many plays as I could and wrote reviews and turned them all in when I went back to Bennington.

Erickson: So it was a good experience?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, it was a wonderful experience.

Erickson: Then you and Phil were married, and you said you were in St. Louis and then (pause) did you come from St. Louis to Riverside? Is that how it worked?

Fouke Wortz: After the war we did, yes.

Erickson: And why did you ... what was interesting about Riverside for you?

Fouke Wortz: Well Phil decided that. We had been here once. We were ... After we left my father's wedding ... He married Norma in 1942 in Las Vegas, when Las Vegas really was dusty. There was just once place on the edge of town, The Last Frontier. And we went there for the wedding, which was lots of fun.

Erickson: Uh huh.

Fouke Wortz: Phil and I got on the train, and going back to St. Louis, we went through Riverside, because Olds (who was with us) was pursuing a cute little blond girl.

Erickson: Now your brother—you call him Olds. Is that his name?

Fouke Wortz: Well his name is really R.E.Olds Anderson, but we call him Olds.

Erickson: So he was in pursuit of a young woman?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, he really was. He was divorced by then from his first wife.

Erickson: Oh. Did he marry this woman?

Fouke Wortz: No, he didn't, but we saw Riverside, drove down to Palm Springs. And it was hideously hot!

Erickson: Was it? What time of the year was it?

Fouke Wortz: September.

(laughter)

Erickson: Oh, it can be. But you went through Riverside. And what was it about that that attracted Phil's attention to Riverside?

Fouke Wortz: Well the size of the town attracted him. It was about 40,000, and that was where we wanted to raise our children.

Erickson: Did you have all three of your children by that point?

Fouke Wortz: We had one son. That was Phil. We called him Quin because he was the fifth Philip.

Erickson: Oh, is that right?

Fouke Wortz: In direct descent.

Erickson: How nice.

Fouke Wortz: But he didn't like the name Quin, so he's Phil now. And then there were two more out here.

Erickson: So you have two sons and a daughter? Why don't you tell a little about what they're doing now.

Fouke Wortz: Phil loves his work. He's a ... he talks on the radio. He has a talk show from 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. in the Upper Desert. Roberta lives in Everett, Washington. She loves to do quilts.

Erickson: Oh.

Fouke Wortz: She's very handy with her hands and very creative.

Erickson: She picked up the sewing talent that you didn't have.

(laughter)

Fouke Wortz: Yes, that's right. She did. And Lee has an engineering bent, and he's in Santa Barbara.

Erickson: Do you see them often?

Fouke Wortz: Not very often. I see Phil mostly 'cause he's only an hour away—luckily.

Erickson: Can you listen to his program?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, I think I could get it on the computer if I knew what to do, but I don't know what to do.

Erickson: All this technology—you'll probably be able to hear him. Well, let's get back to your arriving in Riverside then. Did you know anybody in the city?

Fouke Wortz: As a matter of fact, Pat and Fred Veitch, because Pat's mother Mrs. Dean and my mother had been childhood friends together.

Erickson: And is that Fred Veitch, the person who started the health center here?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. It's named for him. And then across the street on Ladera Lane, the young lady who lived there at that time came over to see me and brought me a lovely bowl of zinnias.

Erickson: Oh, how lovely.

Fouke Wortz: And it developed that her husband, Frank Caulk, had gone to Cranbrook with my brother—in the same class!

Erickson: My goodness. Isn't that interesting.

Fouke Wortz: Isn't it! After that, doors opened very graciously.

Erickson: You said you lived on Ladera Lane in Riverside.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, where Carlotta and Knox Mellon live now.

Erickson: That's a beautiful area.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, it really is. And Bryant School, in those days, was like a private school.

Erickson: Is that right?

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: What did Phil decide to do then?

Fouke Wortz: First he was in air conditioning, and then he got into (pause) He got into two other things, and on the side he had investments. Then he got into fiberglass.

Erickson: Oh. Was that about the beginning of fiberglass?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, it really was. I think he had a nosecone in the first thing that went up into space.

Erickson: No kidding. How interesting. Did he help develop that or ...

Fouke Wortz: He helped develop it, but while we were in St. Louis one time, the plant burned. And after that he'd just ... he'd had it.

Erickson: Oh, that's too bad. But the fiberglass was being made back there?

Fouke Wortz: No.

Erickson: I'm confused.

Fouke Wortz: Apparently ... no, over in his plant in Highland.

Erickson: Oh Highland. But you were back visiting in St. Louis. I see.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: I'm sorry. I didn't understand. Oh, so it burned down.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, and it had a railroad car full of the latest things they'd made for NASA, and it burned. It was a huge contract.

Erickson: That's what I was going to say, he lost all of his contracts.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: Hmm. So what did he do then?

Fouke Wortz: He stuck to investments.

Erickson: Oh, goodness. Well he had quite a few careers then, didn't he?

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm.

Erickson: Did you help out with some of those?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, and I really wanted him to just do sculpting.

Erickson: Oh, he was an artist, too.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, he was. But he felt that wasn't "manly" enough. I felt it was. He had real talent.

Erickson: Do you still have some of his works?

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes. Down in the desert.

Side Two of Tape (A few words were lost).

Erickson: How nice.

Fouke Wortz: And a head of Lee and a head of Phil.

Erickson: But none of your daughter?

Fouke Wortz: No.

Erickson: So he was very talented.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, he really was.

Erickson: Did he study that in school?

Fouke Wortz: He studied here at the Art Center.

Erickson: In Pasadena?

Fouke Wortz: No, in Riverside.

Erickson: Oh!

Fouke Wortz: We called it the Art Center then. And I think he ... I know he did—he studied under Svenson for a while.

Erickson: So you wanted him to do more of that.

Fouke Wortz: I did.

Erickson: Then we should mention that Phil died.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, he died in '74, and within three months, Jean Adair died.

Erickson: And Jean Adair ... well, we should explain for people who aren't aware then. You were ... let's hear your name. It's Peggy Olds Anderson ... No, it's Peggy Anderson Olds.

Fouke Wortz: Peggy Dunn Anderson Fouke Wortz.

Erickson: Peggy Dunn.

Fouke Wortz: Every now and then I work the Olds in. Well, you know—to the Athena group.

Erickson: Well of course.

Fouke Wortz: But Jean Adair came to call on me to see if I were suitable enough for the Junior Aide.

Erickson: Now Jean Adair and Jim Wortz were married at that time?

Fouke Wortz: No. When she came she was Jean Adair Morgan, and she came to call on me, and she decided, I guess, ... she convinced everybody else I could be a good member of Junior Aide.

Erickson: You passed. (chuckle) The Junior Aide is now the Junior League?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, and when I became President I asked her to be my sustaining member on the board. By that time, she had married Jim. Phil kept saying to me, "Jim is lonely." And I thought, of course, he's lonely. But we started double dating, and then Phil and I discovered we were not included on the dates. And then they were married.

Erickson: Oh, that's nice. You had a wonderful friendship for years before.

Fouke Wortz: We did, we did. And Jean Adair and I were the town part of The Affiliates in getting it started.

Erickson: I want to ask you about that. Well, why don't we talk about how you got established with the university?

Fouke Wortz: Oh, I can't remember.

Erickson: Well, you know what I was wondering...? There were a group of leaders who were instrumental in lobbying the Legislature to establish this campus, and I wondered ... that was in the forties ... if you were part of that?

Fouke Wortz: No, I wasn't. But I think it was through Jean Adair and Jim (Wortz) that I became interested. And then Phil (Fouke) rented an office for me downtown, and on that floor was Phil Boyd, Jim Pitchell, Fred Jennings, Don Stevning ...

Erickson: All Riverside leaders.

Fouke Wortz: Uh huh, and I became more and more interested.

Erickson: Uh huh. Now you said ... you still have that office, don't you?

Fouke Wortz: No, I moved. I moved up to Brockton and Twelfth.

Erickson: Oh. Were you conducting your own affairs at that point? You have a foundation.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. At that time I didn't have a foundation, but I did handle my own affairs, and it was better that I have an office.

Erickson: Yes, because you had children at home.

(laughter)

Fouke Wortz: Yes, that's right.

Erickson: Did you go to the office often?

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes. And after Phil died Vic Karadakis said I had to have a secretary.

Erickson: Oh, you were doing everything on your own?

Fouke Wortz: I was—with Phil Boyd's help. He came over every day to see if I were all right. So I got a secretary. That did help.

Erickson: I'm sure it did. Well, what kinds of things did you get involved in on campus in those early days?

Fouke Wortz: Well mostly the Citizens University Committee (CUC) meetings. I was membership chairman two years. Then when I left that job, they had all the members they wanted.

Erickson: Oh, they did?

Fouke Wortz: We couldn't squeeze any more into the little dining room.

Erickson: Where was that?

Fouke Wortz: We blossomed into the big cafeteria.

Erickson: In the Commons area?

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: You filled the room. I'd say you were a successful membership chairman.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

(laughter)

It worked out well.

Erickson: You did that ... Was Jim also the President of CUC?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, he was. In the early days.

Erickson: What interaction did you have with Phil Boyd then?

Fouke Wortz: Well very little except that I did know when they went to Europe to get the bells for the Carillon. I knew about that. But you know we saw the Boyds so often.

Erickson: Socially?

Fouke Wortz: Well, socially, and also in the summertime they went up to Northern Michigan quite near us.

Erickson: Oh they had a home there? A summer home?

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: Hmm. How interesting. So you were together a lot then?

Fouke Wortz: Yes we were.

Erickson: You mentioned Affiliates. Would you talk about that and the origin of it?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. Ivan Hinderaker felt that Riverside should have a women's ... you know, a little more interaction between faculty wives and people in the community.

Erickson: Was CUC mostly men?

Fouke Wortz: (pause) No, I don't think so. But I think a lot of women didn't ... Well it's early in the morning ... a lot of children to push out the front door.

Erickson: Sure.

Fouke Wortz: That's why I missed a lot of it. But Ivan felt that we should have more interaction, and so Jean Adair and I and Betty Earley and Jean ... (pause) (*Gillett*) I'll think of her name in a minute ... worked together almost for a year and a half.

Erickson: What was the goal? What was the mission of The Affiliates?

Fouke Wortz: At that point we didn't ... Well to bring together the women and have interesting meetings so they'd all get to know each other. But the reason it took so long was because we were very careful. We didn't want to leave anybody out who should be in, so we really worked on that. And we had a "tiger by the tail" when we finished.

Erickson: I'm sure. Did you divide up duties? Is that how it worked? Or did you just all work collectively?

Fouke Wortz: Well, Jean Adair and I worked on the city side, and the two wives—the campus wives—worked on the campus side.

Erickson: Oh I see. So you would get together and share your information.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. I think we got together at least once a month with Birk.

Erickson: Birk Hinderaker?

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. At the Chancellor's home. We finally got it all together and had Dan Aldrich for our first speaker.

Erickson: Was he here as a professor then?

Fouke Wortz: No, he was Chancellor at Irvine.

Erickson: Well how nice to bring him back. That's great.

Fouke Wortz: Yeh.

Erickson: So you had established a program along with the social aspect of the group, too.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: Was it always a university professor?

Fouke Wortz: Well, you know the campus has many people coming to talk.

Erickson: Um hmm.

Fouke Wortz: So we often would invite whoever was coming to the campus. We also invited a lot of the professors, and one of the very popular ones was Richard Carrot.

Erickson: Oh, I'm sure he was. (pause) Let's see. I wanted to talk about the Foundation Board, because you've been a member of that. Do you remember when you became a member?

Fouke Wortz: I cannot recall, but I do remember that we were such a small group that we could sit around a table.

Erickson: Really? Well were you one of its very first members?

Fouke Wortz: Could have been.

Erickson: Probably, uh huh.

Fouke Wortz: I could have been. I think so because we had Bob Toll in those days, and he had come from Michigan State University and knew my family there, so I was automatically invited.

Erickson: Of course.

Fouke Wortz: I remember Fred Jennings was on it, and Phil Boyd (pause) possibly Jim Pitchell and John Babbage.

Erickson: Oh, of course. And was Ivan Hinderaker Chancellor then, too, when that was formed?

Fouke Wortz: You know I can't really remember.

Erickson: I think it was Ivan, but we'll check.

Fouke Wortz: It could have been.

Erickson: What were some of those early concerns for the foundation? What did you work on?

Fouke Wortz: They were not nearly as broad as they are now. Really, it's much better now. We were concerned with things that were coming to campus. You know, things that we would need and things like that, but back then, it was when UCR was heading in a different direction, you know, with undergraduates.

Erickson: So the focus was different?

Fouke Wortz: There wasn't as much research except in the Citrus Experiment Station.

Erickson: Oh, uh huh. You have served in a very distinguished way, and I want to call attention to this lovely award that you received.

Fouke Wortz: Well thank you, Jan. I think it's really lovely.

Erickson: It really is. It says for "exemplary service."

Fouke Wortz: Well thank you.

Erickson: And it's dated December 11, 1997. That's quite a commitment on your part.

Fouke Wortz: Well I certainly enjoyed everything I did.

Erickson: Good. But you still come to some meetings?

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: You just decided to taper off a little? Is that it?

Fouke Wortz: Well I think with Jim's health, I had to give up quite a few things.

Erickson: How long have you and Jim been married now?

Fouke Wortz: Twenty three years.

Erickson: Is it twenty three?

Fouke Wortz: Twenty four this year.

Erickson: His health is ... well, how would you describe his health now?

Fouke Wortz: Well right now it's remarkably good. It really is. He did have a heart attack in July, and they did give him a shock

Fouke Wortz: treatment in September, so that his heart would not beat unevenly. But it didn't take.

Erickson: Oh. But he is in remarkably good health for having experienced all that.

Fouke Wortz: Yes. He's recovered from that beautifully.

Erickson: Except for the hearing.

Fouke Wortz: Well the hearing—that is a problem.

Erickson: Um hmm. Because we would certainly be interviewing him, too.

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes, and he'd be a fountain of information, too.

Erickson: He certainly would because he was a leader for so many years ... in the city and on the campus. (pause) Who are some of the Chancellors that you've worked with closely?

Fouke Wortz: Besides Ivan. Oh, Herman and Evelyn Spieth. We knew them very well, because their son Phil was the same age as our son Phil, and they were at Bryant School together.

Erickson: Oh. So you spent a lot of time with them, I'm sure.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm.

Erickson: So it dates all the way back to Spieths then. And you said Ivan and you were very involved in the Foundation Board and Affiliates.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, and I did know Gordon Watkins

Erickson: Oh you did? How would you describe him?

Fouke Wortz: Well I thought he did a fine job, maybe he was a little old for it.

Erickson: Do you think?

Fouke Wortz: What do you think?

Erickson: You know I didn't know him, but I just can appreciate all the time and energy and thought that he put into establishing this campus.

Fouke Wortz: Oh well, it was a big job. But I think that the young people relate more to Eva and Ray.

Erickson: Do they?

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. They've really ignited the campus.

Erickson: Exciting things are happening aren't there?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, it's wonderful.

Erickson: So you've known all the chancellors.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: How was it ... You talked about the exciting times now ... How was it in the days when enrollment had dropped substantially and there was talk of maybe downsizing or even closing the campus? Do you remember that time?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, but I'm certainly happy they didn't close it. At that time all the young people wanted to go to Irvine and LaJolla—you know, near the ocean.

Erickson: Uh huh.

Fouke Wortz: So they could surf. (chuckle)

Erickson: Sure. Well it takes a long time to establish a campus.

Fouke Wortz: Well I certainly give your Jim and Ray a lot of credit for that.

Erickson: It's an interesting time and place.

Fouke Wortz: It really is.

Erickson: Let's see. I wanted to also talk about your Chancellor's Medal that you have displayed around your neck.

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: Would you describe how that came about?

Fouke Wortz: Well it was given to me on Founders Day in 1993. October 19, and I was really thrilled. I really was ... just thrilled.

Erickson: Oh I'm sure.

Fouke Wortz: At that time they honored the two women who started ChildHelp. Do you remember that?

Erickson: Yes I do.

Fouke Wortz: And they also honored Mrs. Sinatra for what she does in the desert. They all spoke first, and when I rose to speak, I can't remember now what I said, but everybody laughed and clapped.

(laughter)

Erickson: Good.

Fouke Wortz: So it went well.

Erickson: Well some other very distinguished people have received the award. I know Walter Annenberg was one.

Fouke Wortz: And the Bob Hopes and Gerald Ford.

Erickson: Bob Hope and Gerald Ford. Now that's good company, isn't it?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, but Ray and I had ours first.

Erickson: Very nice. You also have another very coveted award ... that's your UCR parking pass.

Fouke Wortz: Oh my parking pass is marvelous.

Erickson: Are you the envy of everyone, Peggy?

Fouke Wortz: I am. Everybody wants me to go with them.

(laughter)

Hang it in their car.

Erickson: How did you get that?

Fouke Wortz: It was given to me at dinner at Eva and Ray's in December of '97.

Erickson: It was a dinner in your honor, wasn't it?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. It was for what both Jim and I had done for the campus. And believe me, we watch that parking thing. We won't let it out of our sights.

Erickson: No, I wouldn't either. I'd lock it up every night.

Fouke Wortz: It won't expire until I die.

Erickson: That's great. Well you have been such a wonderful supporter of the Botanic Gardens here on campus. I wonder if you would talk about that, you know, what affiliation you have with that?

Fouke Wortz: Well I love that, and I love gardening. When I was on the Board—the Riverside Community Foundation Board—some

Fouke Wortz: woman (I can't remember who) left some money to build a ramp for the wheel chairs up to the Upper Level. But she didn't leave enough.

Erickson: Oh is that right?

Fouke Wortz: So I was very happy to help out. On the day that we dedicated it, we went out to the Gardens and they were all there in their wheel chairs. And after Rosemary ...

Erickson: Rosemary Schraer.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. After Rosemary spoke and I spoke, then we cut the ribbon and it was just wonderful to see them all ... Well they all tried to zoom up the ramp but they couldn't very well.

Erickson: But that's wonderful that you provided that, because there was no other way.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, and I've had so many nice letters about it.

Erickson: Great. I wonder if you'd talk about when you help another organization through your foundation, what is it that you look for in an organization? What appeals to you about it?

Fouke Wortz: Well I like to look at it and see how many people it will help, and I also look to see how much their administration costs are.

Erickson: Oh. That's interesting.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. Because there's not much point in supporting the administration. And that's why I give a lot of scholarships.

Erickson: Do you do this personally? I mean do you ... Excuse me. Do you meet with the group or the organization yourself?

Fouke Wortz: No. People come and meet me at my office or they write for a grant.

Erickson: But you talk directly with them.

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes.

Erickson: That's what I meant.

Fouke Wortz: And it's my decision. However, my fund is at the California Community Foundation, because when we broke up the family foundation, we were down to five members: three cousins, my brother and myself. So with the blessing of the IRS—it took *us* two years—but we were able to break it up, because I put my fund with a public foundation as opposed to a private foundation. They were all able to keep theirs in private foundations.

Erickson: But you have been able to help quite a few?

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes.

Erickson: Are they mostly individuals or are they organizations?

Fouke Wortz: Oh I don't generally help individuals. I can't think of any time I ever have.

Erickson: I see.

Fouke Wortz: We have a ruling on that in our family foundation, and I just carried on that way. We divided it in half, and our cousins took half and Olds and I took half, and then Olds and I divided ours.

Erickson: Well there's a huge responsibility that goes along with that.

Fouke Wortz: And I also ... I like to check up on what's happened to them to see if it went for what I intended.

Erickson: Oh now that's interesting. Do you ask for a report or something?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. And the Dickens Festival people have been wonderful about giving me reports.

Erickson: Have they?

Fouke Wortz: They've just finished.

Erickson: We're all appreciative of everything you've done.

Fouke Wortz: Well it's really wonderful to be able to help people.

Erickson: Sure, sure it is. What occupies most of your time now, Peggy, in this retirement stage of your life?

Fouke Wortz: Jim. I do all the phoning, make all of his appointments, tell him who's on the phone and what they want.

Erickson: Why don't you explain how you communicate with Jim.

Fouke Wortz: Mostly by writing.

Erickson: And he finds ... would you explain how sometimes he sees a word and misinterprets the meaning of it. Is that how we would explain it? Or he sees something different?

Fouke Wortz: No, he hears it differently.

Erickson: Oh he hears it differently.

Fouke Wortz: And then I have to write it for him.

Erickson: And then he can understand it when he sees it in print?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, uh huh.

Erickson: Yes, that would Is it very taxing for you?

Fouke Wortz: Yes, it's slow progress. Well I'm more in tune with it now. At first I was so tired.

Erickson: Sure.

Fouke Wortz: And he is driving more now than he was.

Erickson: So he's feeling more independent.

Fouke Wortz: Oh indeed he is! He just passed his drivers license.

Erickson: Now do you spend a lot of time here in Riverside and then also in the desert, too?

Fouke Wortz: The aim is to go to the desert, and that's what we'll do as soon as I'm able to.

Erickson: Yes. We should explain you are having a problem with your back, aren't you?

Fouke Wortz: The sciatica. But I've arranged for Jim to have all of his blood tests down at the desert. So I'm what my father would call the lame brain.

(laughter)

Erickson: What months do you like to spend down there?

Fouke Wortz: Generally January, February, March and April, because friends come.

Erickson: Oh they do? From back east?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. One couple comes from back east.

Erickson: How nice. How about Riverside? Do you get many guests here?

Fouke Wortz: Oh yes.

Erickson: So it's a full life for you.

Fouke Wortz: Yes it is, but we no longer invite too many golfers down there. Jim can't play golf anymore.

Erickson: Oh he doesn't?

Fouke Wortz: No.

Erickson: Well maybe he'll get that back.

Fouke Wortz: One thing he enjoys doing—he likes to go over to the Living Desert and help out in the garden.

Erickson: Oh yes. You've been very supportive of that. Have you been president of that, too, in addition to being a benefactor?

Fouke Wortz: Yes.

Erickson: Why don't you talk a little about it?

Fouke Wortz: I've been on the board. I cannot remember how long, but it was just before Phil Boyd died that he asked me to go on the board.

Erickson: Do you remember when he established that (Living Desert)?

Fouke Wortz: Yes. In 1970 or '71. I remember because Phil and I are founders.

Erickson: Both of you are? (pause)

Fouke Wortz: Phil Fouke.

Erickson: Oh, Phil Fouke. I'm sorry. How nice then. So then you became a board member.

Fouke Wortz: Well it must have been '89 or '90, I can't remember.

Erickson: But it's beautiful. ... Well why don't you talk about the little garden area that you and Jim Wortz established.

Fouke Wortz: Well we enjoyed establishing this lovely garden, which shows people what they can plant around their homes in the desert. They do not have to have pansies and larkspur and snap dragons.

Erickson: They take a lot of water.

Fouke Wortz: Because the desert flowers are lovely, and with a little water, they do very well. So we established this garden, and one of the men on the board laid it out.

Erickson: Is that a large board, too?

Fouke Wortz: Oh very ... I think it's big—thirty six of us. (pause) Wayne Connor worked on it, and some of the concrete blocks are veined as though they were Navajo rocks.

Erickson: Oh really? How pretty.

Fouke Wortz: Didn't you see it?

Erickson: I did, now that you say it.

Fouke Wortz: Um hmm. And we have all different kinds of fountains and a pergola, which we gave to honor my mother.

Erickson: Oh. That's quite a place.

Fouke Wortz: Yes, um hmm.

Erickson: Would you like to bring up anything that we didn't talk about?

Fouke Wortz: Oh I think we've talked about quite a bit. I'm afraid people will think I'm bragging.

Erickson: Oh no, not at all. You've had a wonderful life, haven't you?

Fouke Wortz: I really have, a remarkable life.

Erickson: Thank you so much for sharing that with us.

Fouke Wortz: Oh it's been a pleasure, Jan. Thank you.

Erickson: You're very welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

Text in *italics* has been edited by Mrs. Wortz.