



A Century of Extension in the Klamath Basin, July 14, 2015

Title

Alumna Memories and a Career in Real Estate

Date

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Klamath Basin Research and Extension Center, Klamath Falls, Oregon.

Summary

In her individual interview, Linda Weider reflects on her undergraduate years at OSU and her life after college. In this, she shares details of her upbringing in Idaho, her academic progression at OSU as a Microbiology major, her social involvements, and her experience of living on the Children's Farm Home outside of Corvallis. She then describes the process by which she and her husband settled in Klamath Falls and raised their family on a 117-acre farm. The session concludes with a discussion of Weider's career in real estate and her thoughts on community life and socioeconomic problems in Klamath Falls.

Interviewee

Linda Weider

Interviewer

Chris Petersen

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/klamath/>

Transcript

Chris Petersen: OK, today is July 14th, 2015. I'm with Linda Weider here in Klamath Falls at the Klamath Basin Research and Extension Center. We've just completed our interview with Linda and Senator Doug Whitsett about Vet Med and about Linda's father, Guy Reynolds. And we're going to talk to Linda now about her experience as a student at Oregon State.

I'm interested, Linda, in knowing a little bit about what you were interested in when you were growing up as a girl in Caldwell.

Linda Weider: Well, I was always interested in riding horses. And I got as a Christmas gift, when I was in the fifth grade, a horse, for Christmas. Dad rode up on it. And I immediately went riding to see a friend and the horse shook and I fell off. And I rode horses through probably my sophomore year in college.

CP: So you had a horse in Corvallis?

LW: Yes, I did. And then my daughter was into horses. So I probably quit riding about twenty years ago.

CP: What was school like for you growing up?

LW: College at Corvallis?

CP: High school and before high school, as a girl growing into pre-college years.

LW: Well, first of all, it was always an assumption in my family that we would go to college, and all four of us kids did graduate from college. I was a good student, I wasn't an excellent student, which is also an aside from what we were talking about earlier, it's harder to get into vet school and into PT school than it is med school, because there's so many students trying to get into it. So I'm not sure – I was a good student but I probably would have had difficulty getting into vet school, just looking at it very practically.

CP: Well, you grew up in Idaho but you went to school at Oregon State, why did you decide to leave the state and go to OSU?

LW: I wanted the heck out of Idaho. I was looking at the University of Washington; I didn't even look at Pullman. But I had decided to go into med tech, so it was University of Washington or Oregon State. It's a good thing I didn't look at San Luis Obispo because that's a beautiful area. My counselor recommended Oregon State and it fit into OHSU in Portland, in the med tech program, so that's how I wound up in Corvallis.

CP: Had you ever visited before you arrived?

LW: Never been on campus before. I had always heard about what a beautiful campus. In fact, I had a lot of people say they thought it was one of the prettiest campuses around.

CP: What was your impression then, of the university and of the town?

LW: Well, it was kind of interesting because it wasn't real great. We came down I-5, which had just been built, it wasn't even completed beyond Eugene, and Dad was driving beside another car on I-5. There were two gals and it was loaded with clothes and he says, "I'll be they're going to Oregon State, so I'll follow them." And so he got off in Albany and we went through Corvallis and we could see Corvallis going by and we were headed out the coast, and Dad says, "I think that's the campus." So we came in on the back side, very close to the Vet Diagnostic Lab, and I don't remember the name of the street but the old married student housing that was in there had just been torn down. It was all torn up and it looked really gross. But that's how I landed at Oregon State.

CP: How about the town?

LW: Circle Drive was about the end of the housing in Corvallis and it was always a comfortable town. Coming from the high desert area of Boise to Corvallis, I didn't really realize it until I left Corvallis, but I got tired of the rain. I need sunshine; even if there's snow on the ground, if there's blue sky, I'm good. So I would say that Corvallis was fine as far as growing up; you're so focused on your studies. But if I were to do it again, to be very forthright, I'm not sure I would go back to Corvallis, even though my sisters and brother graduated there, mom went to school there and dad worked there.

CP: So it sounds like adjustment wasn't too tough, though.

LW: No. I wound up taking tough classes and I was in the Science program, and I struggled the first couple of terms and finally got going. And I was a B/C student, I certainly wasn't an A student.

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CP: Well, you studied Microbiology and you mentioned you were interested in med tech, that's the connection there?

LW: Well, my degree was going to be in med tech and I was married – I met my husband over a dead pig in the Vet Diagnostic Lab. [laughs] And we were married for forty-seven years; we had a really good marriage. I lost my concentration...

CP: Microbiology.

LW: So, we married in March, I went up to OHSU to start the med tech program, walked in and saw all the autoanalyzers and went, "you know, I don't think I want to be away from my husband for a year and I don't know that there's a future with all these autoanalyzers going on." So I walked out, went down to my advisor at Oregon State and said, "get me out in a year." And so I switched to Microbiology and graduated the following year. Then I went home and told my husband what I had done. [laughs]

CP: Were there any professors who made a particular impact on you?

LW: Yes. I would say there were probably two professors that were excellent. One was a History professor and I'm not going to remember his name.

CP: Do you remember the class?

LW: It was American history. He came from a college back in Pennsylvania, I believe. It's been so long. But he would walk in, set his briefcase down, and he would not look at a note. And he made American history live. He was super.

The other – and I'm not going to remember his name either – he was very well thought of and he taught chemistry in the old Chem Building. I want to say Dr. Ross and that could very well be wrong. But anyhow, those are the two professors that I recall.

I had a Biology teacher in high school who taught biology. I was one of those students who got caught up in the Sputnik type of thing where we got to focus on science, and I started biology as a ninth grader, had advanced biology as a junior, and a Mr. Boyle, who was out of Stanford, taught that class. And it was all lecture notes and he was a tremendous teacher.

CP: What was it like being a woman in the sciences at this time?

LW: I can only remember one other gal who was in Engineering. So it was pretty uncommon to be in the sciences at that time. I don't remember one way or the other about it, it was a lot of just going down the road and doing what you wanted to do. And the political side of it hadn't really hit us, because I graduated from Oregon State in '66. The only thing I can remember us being unhappy, as a student body, about was the food. I think we hung the president, President Jensen, in effigy, because the food was so bad in the cafeteria. We weren't burning bras and doing all the other things, [laughs] but that was our way of voicing our discontent.

Actually, I have two sisters that are five and six years younger than I am. They were a whole different generation, a whole different way of thinking that occurred from the time from '66 to '71.

CP: So they had a different experience of campus climate.

LW: Oh yeah. They look at life a lot differently than I do. And they both graduate from Oregon State.

CP: You mentioned, in our last interview, that you had a job working with slides. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

LW: Beats me what I did. [laughs] I just organized them.

CP: And this was in the Vet Diagnostic Lab?

LW: Right.

CP: So they were slides of samples?

LW: Well, there in the Diagnostic Lab, they had taken a lot of slides over the years and they hadn't been well-categorized. And I think maybe the file cabinet that they were filed in had fallen, so they were all mixed up. So I was just categorizing them.

CP: Did you have any other campus jobs?

LW: I worked in the MU, waitressing.

CP: Do you remember where you were at? The name of the restaurant?

LW: Oh heavens. Actually, it was kind of interesting, I was in the MU and I don't know that it had a name. I mean, it was the only cafeteria on campus at that time. But I had been in school maybe two weeks when the Columbus Day Storm hit, and I remember sitting in there and just watching trees go over like toothpicks. I mean, it was quite a storm and what a mess campus was. And I think some of the trees are still wired together from that storm.

[0:10:21]

CP: I have had plenty of people tell me about that storm.

You pledged a sorority, is that right?

LW: I did.

CP: Can you tell me about your sorority experience?

LW: I pledged Alpha Gamma Delta and enjoyed it. I found that when you're in the sciences, you might have sixteen to eighteen hours of classwork, but you've got another six to ten hours of lab work that has to go on. And I found that I wound up finding spaces in the MU, the Piano Room, places in the library that were in the corners where I could just be by myself and focus. Because I couldn't do it either in the dormitory or in the sorority very well. One night, when I was about a sophomore, I had a friend who worked in the Chem Building, and he would let me in, and I would study in their library up on the second floor. And that was wonderful except one night I fell asleep and we had dorm hours, we had hours that we had to be back in at 10:00. And I got campus, because I was late, they called the police, they called my parents. It was like, "oh dear." It was a different time.

CP: Very different environment for women back then.

LW: Yeah. You didn't put guys and gals in the same dormitory and you had to be in by 10:00 on weekdays and 12:00 on weekends. It's amazing, the changes.

CP: Were you living in the sorority house? Or were you living in a dorm?

LW: Well, I lived in the dorm my first year. I didn't pledge the first year and I wanted to make sure I was well-ground before. I wasn't big on sororities, it wasn't a big deal to me, and I had some friends in the house so I wound up pledging. And the friendships that I got out of that were good, but they've not been long lasting. The dorm friends were longer, I still have – well, that's not true, I have one friend from the sorority that I'm still in contact with, and one from the dormitory. I just didn't have a whole lot of patience for a lot of the formalities – memorizing, those kinds of things, rituals. I just went, "I've got other things to do, I've got to study."

CP: What was social life like for you?

LW: It was fun. Certainly went out and did a lot of – a lot of dances went on at the time. I know I was at a sock hop the first term and this guy went across and he wanted to know where the head was, and I couldn't hear, and I kept saying, "the what? The what?" [laughs] I was just young and didn't know much.

CP: So the dances were a big deal then?

LW: Dances and exchanges, yeah. I had a girlfriend and I, we hitchhiked to the – no, we rode a bus – over to Newport, got a motel room. The manager of the motel was a motherly girl, she took us, "oh, you two girls are over here by yourself." And then we were trying to figure out how to get back to Corvallis that weekend, so we called the radio station and said, "we need a ride back to Corvallis." [laughs] We got a ride back to Corvallis. I don't know how smart it was, but you could do that in that day and age.

CP: You said dances and exchanges?

LW: Well, the sororities and fraternities would do exchange dances.

CP: OK. Were you involved in any clubs or anything like that? Extracurricular activities?

LW: I really wasn't. I needed to focus on my studies. I was in, it was an Air Force drill team – Angel Flight, I think is what it was called at the time. So I was involved in that. Not much else. I went to a football game; the first time I ever saw condoms floating in the air [laughs] in lieu of balloons.

[0:14:54]

CP: That's the first time I've heard that one.

Did you have any hangouts?

LW: No, I just don't remember. There were little places, pizza parlors and along Monroe, across from campus, that we used to hang out at. Downtown there was a place and out by Philomath there was a place. I don't remember the names of them anymore.

CP: You mentioned that the library was the old library, the Kidder Library. What do you remember about the Kidder Library?

LW: It was a beautiful building. I remember the wood paneling in it and, up on the second balcony, there was a railing around it and you could look down on the main floor of the library. It was a pretty building. It was small compared to the library building that replaced it. I don't even know what the building – I think it's still there.

CP: Yeah.

LW: But I was only in the old library the first year, so the main library must have been being built. There was a fair amount of building that was going on when I went to school there. I think Snell Hall was brand new and now it looks really old. [laughs] West Hall was new. We used to look out on the tennis courts and, when we got tired of studying, we'd go out and play tennis and look back at the dorm and go, "yeah, we're in little boxes." [laughs]

CP: And you spent a fair amount of time in the MU as well, it sounds like.

LW: Yeah. I did a lot of studying in the MU because it was so central to classes. In an hour or two break, it was a good place to study. And I really liked the – on the second floor, and I don't remember the names, it was just a large place, I think they often had meetings up there or social gatherings, but there's two small rooms off of that central large room, with long tables. And that was a great place to study.

CP: So you were married in college?

LW: I got married March of my junior year.

CP: And you had known your husband before college? Is that correct?

LW: No, I met him the summer – I stayed over, I didn't go home, the summer between my sophomore and junior year. And I was working at the Diagnostic Lab and living with a friend out at the trailer park. I think we paid \$25.00 total for rent in her trailer; split between us it was \$12.50, it was really good. And she lifeguarded up at the country club and her folks had a house at Lincoln beach and we had a fun summer. And I met my husband that summer. He brought in a pig for autopsy work. He was managing the animal part of the farming operation of the Children's Farm Home, and so he brought in a dead pig for autopsy work and that's how we met.

CP: Is the Children's Farm Home that's on the way to Albany? A little way out of town?

LW: [nods head yes] When we were married we lived out there for about two years.

CP: Tell me about that.

LW: Well, I was by there just in the last month and they're doing more expansion to it. The Old School was an old school, it's not the nice restaurant that it is today. We lived clear to the far back and my husband, he graduated in Animal Science and he was managing that farm operation. The kids that were there were delinquents, they were short of going to MacLaren, and so we had all kinds of issues show up. We had some folks over for dinner one night and the car was stolen - their car, our guests' car was stolen. There was milking that went on twice a day that was, boy, milking is hard work. You've got to be there 24/7, 365. And actually, Kraig took over the farm and said the Farm Home itself would be better off leasing out the ground, economics-wise, it would be better off leasing out the grand to surrounding farmers, and that's what they did at that time, and then we moved out of the area. But at the time that we were there, the kids were doing the milking and they were growing strawberry plants and doing the farm work. We had horses there at the time too.

It was an interesting thing. It was at that time that we decided a lot of social workers were – this is probably not politically correct – but a lot of the social workers were there to try and solve their own problems as well as the kids' problems. I think Mr. Lillier [?] was there, he was one of the administrators, and he was running down the streets of Albany without no clothes on.

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The administrator, Don Miller, was excellent, and he went on to put the Department of Human Services together later.

CP: So your husband was an OSU grad?

LW: Correct.

CP: And did he start working at the farm directly after his graduation?

LW: He worked for Swift for a couple of years. He was in the military, went into the military, came out, worked for Swift for a couple years and then picked up the farm management position. And his father worked for the *G-T* for years and covered the education beat, and it was through a lot of his work and writing that Linn-Benton Community College went together.

CP: So your husband grew up in Corvallis?

LW: No he didn't. He grew up in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. His family broke up; he was an only child. His mom had come back to the West Coast, his dad was in public relations for Chevron and Lockheed and did a lot of lobbying in Congress. After the breakup of the marriage, Kraig was shipped out, on his own, to Idaho Falls. Got off of the bus, enrolled in his senior year in high school, and went down and had lodging with a family, and had the best high school year of his life. Then his dad came out, finally sold the house, and picked him up after he had worked in Yellowstone Park that summer. And they came to Corvallis.

CP: Because his dad had the job?

LW: Well, actually his dad had a job up in Newberg. But no, Kraig had picked out Oregon State because he wanted to be on a farm or a ranch, he wanted to manage it. And that's why he graduated in Animal Science. He wound up being a real estate broker.

CP: How did things change for you when you got married? You still had some school to go. I presume your experience was very different as a married student.

LW: Kraig was eight years older than I at the time, and it was imperative as far as he was concerned, and for myself, to graduate. So we did that. I don't know if I answered your question.

CP: Well, it seems like you become married and you have a different perspective, different obligations. You're probably a little less socially engaged; that's just a guess.

LW: Oh yeah, definitely. Yeah, you're just not as involved with campus as you are when you're on campus.

CP: Was there any overlap at all between when you were in Corvallis and your parents being there? It seems like they kind of came when you left.

LW: That's about what happened. I think maybe I was there a year or two years after they came, and then we moved back to Wisconsin for a year. So there was a little bit of time, but not much.

CP: And you ultimately decided to locate to Klamath Falls.

LW: My husband didn't like his job in Wisconsin. He was managing a Charolaise farm back there. And he loved the Pacific Northwest and said he'd never leave it again. So he found a job in feed management here in Klamath Falls. It was supposed to last six months and I think I've been here forty-five years. We skied then, when we lived in Corvallis, and that was always where we wanted to land. And we just loved the people and the climate of Klamath Falls so much that we thoroughly enjoyed being here. Both our kids have studied overseas, they've both graduated from college, and they're both back in Klamath Falls. So we've been very fortunate.

CP: And you did have a ranch, is that correct?

LW: We did have a 117-acre farm, it's just down the road from here, at the end of the road. We didn't have any farm equipment, it was all leased out, subbed out, to other farmers who had the equipment. But we irrigated it. We had alfalfa and grain. It was a great place to raise the kids. They had 4-H projects and our son got his first deer on the ground; he had a trap line that ran in the morning. Our daughter had horses and we raised sheep. It was a great way to raise kids.

[0:25:14]

CP: You mentioned 4-H, I was going to ask you about the connection with Extension. We're here at an Extension center, what sorts of involvement did the family have with Extension growing up?

LW: Well, we were very involved with it in both horse and sheep. I think that the 4-H program, as far as a government-run program, I think it's the best program out there for families and kids. I can't speak enough praise for 4-H.

CP: Can you talk a little bit about some of the specifics of 4-H for those who might not know?

LW: Well, as a parent, you're not to touch the animals and help, but you help on the back side. It really taught record-keeping and responsibility. Those animals needed to be fed, they needed to be cared for, they needed to be groomed. And I would say that it really helped both my son and daughter in getting up in front of judges, having to perform, having to think on their feet. They had really good friends that they met through the project, other good friends as families that we met. Pat Jarski [?] ran the horse program here for years and she did a fantastic job. So I just can't speak high enough of the 4-H program.

CP: Somebody I'm going to interview a little bit later on, on this trip, is the daughter of Charlie Henderson. Do you have any connection with him? He was agriculturalist of some renown.

LW: [shakes head no]

CP: Maybe a little too early for you.

LW: Maybe.

CP: So at some point, you got involved in real estate. Was it your husband originally and then came along a little bit later? Or did you both do this from the get-go?

LW: Well, we were living here on Washburn Way and his job at the co-op – let's see, the co-op burned, and he was working in sales, I think, of molasses as a supplement to the ag people. And our next door neighbor was the main commercial real estate broker in the community. And he leaned over the fence one day and asked Kraig how much he was making. And Kraig told him and he said, "you need to go into real estate." And so Kraig started taking the classes and, in the meantime, we bought the farm, and the job had ended. So it was like, "ok, might as well go into real estate and give it a try." And the try lasted about thirty-seven years. And we wound up owning our own office; we have the Windermere office here locally. And we didn't work with that gentleman, Jim Stowell, to start with. And to help Kraig study, I studied it.

And I was also substitute teaching at the time. I had wound up teaching back in Wisconsin, couldn't find a job. In microbiology you really need to have a doctorate degree and I knew that back in that day and age. I walked into the school administration one day and said, "do you need somebody to teach?" And they said, "oh, we need a Biology teacher tomorrow." So with no education background, in the education field, I wound up teaching Biology and I loved it; I really enjoyed teaching. And when we moved back here, I wound up substitute teaching when we had children, when they were young. And then I wound up going along with Kraig and helping him get his real estate license, and then I got my real estate license and worked part-time for a while. And then when the kids went in school, then I went full-time, and thoroughly enjoyed it. I never thought I would see myself in sales and, actually, as a broker you really are a counselor. You're dealing with most people's largest savings account and you try and help them make good decisions based on what they want, not what I wanted. It was, "ok, what meets their needs?" So I found it was a one-on-one educational process and thoroughly enjoyed it. And really had a thumb on what was going on within the community, and enjoyed it.

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CP: Out of 157 interviews we've done, you're the first person we've talked to that has been involved in real estate, and I'm interested in learning a little bit more about how you build up your own skillset to become successful in that profession.

LW: Well, first of all, when you take the test, you study for the state questions. When you pass it, you're really not set to sell because the legal side of filling out the contracts and just the day-to-day process is very different from studying for the exam. That industry has changed dramatically as other industries have. I think the good part about it is it has kept me up, certainly not on top of the computer changes that we've incurred, but certainly well ahead of a lot of other people my age. Now, my husband just didn't get into computers at all. He was eight years beyond and I could see that distance. Just like the five years behind with my sisters is a whole different social philosophy, also in computer knowledge.

But real estate, getting the skills for real estate took a lot of classwork. Because of the education that we had in our background, I often wondered if that would really help. It did when I worked with a lot of hospital docs, medical professionals moving into town. I kind of knew their lingo, I could talk it to a certain degree, and I would say that was very helpful. And because we had the educational background we have, we put a lot into our education, we went to a

lot of classwork. And what we were working on was basically the doctorate of real estate, which is called a CCIM. My husband did just commercial real estate after a couple years. I did both residential and then picked up commercial in the end.

But those classes that we took for the CCIM designation were probably as demanding as most any class we took at Oregon State. They started at eight in the morning, we quit a five at night, and we often had two instructors in front of us, and we would study until midnight to get ready for the class the next day. They were demanding. We had very few buyers or sellers that were asking those kinds of questions that we were learning, but it was in depth and it was an excellent education.

CP: You mentioned being involved in real estate, you're obviously very closely connected to the community. You've been here many years, I'm interesting – one of the things that we're trying to accomplish in this project is to try to get a sense of where the state is at in different regions that we're visiting, and I'd be interested in your perspective on change in this area and the challenges and the opportunities that you see in the Klamath Falls area right now.

LW: That's a tough question. I was involved with downtown redevelopment for twenty-five years, and that's where we did a lot of street improvements. What you saw when driving down the main street, Klamath Avenue, the community put about \$8 million into those projects. We probably look better than we are, economically. The community has been hurting since the '80s. When the forest industry went down – there was a time when students growing up in this community could get really good family wage jobs by staying here in the community. And a lot of them haven't gotten over that – there's still that mentality but instead of having the jobs, they're leaning on much more menial work. Good family wage jobs are not here right now. And the Great Recession that we just went through seven years ago didn't help things there.

We have a lot of potential in this community. Between the Kingsley Air Force, the medical center and OIT, this community could really thrive. And I'm just now starting to see it, I hope it comes to fruition, is the community working together. It's been very divided between the suburban area and the city area for, I think, most of the life of Klamath Falls. This town never saw a problem in the Great Depression because the timber industry was doing so well. If you look at the architecture on our main street, it is unique architecture that was built in the '30s, because most towns in the country didn't build in the '30s. So as a consequence, we've got a unique main street and it's the longest main street in Oregon. And it's unique from the geothermal that's used in it. Our sidewalks, on the main street and where you see the brick crossing the crosswalks, are all heated by geothermal heat. So we don't have to scrape off the snow in the wintertime, which is a huge advantage when you own a building downtown, which I do.

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What I'm seeing now is our biggest export has been our youth. Our kids have gone away to college and they tend not to come back. They can get better paying jobs elsewhere. Many of them would like to remain here or to come back here, but the jobs aren't here. The good family wage jobs haven't been here. And I think that's going to be the challenge of Klamath, is to build that job base. And I think we can do it, but it's going to take some work. I was involved with Klamath County Economic Development over this last year, we've gone in, we've changed the by-laws. It's pay to play. If you want to be on this board, it's going to cost and we want people who can make business decisions and see this community grow. And I think the potential is there. I think the groundwork is laid for it, now we'll see in the next couple of years.

CP: Have you had much of a continuing connection with Oregon State over the last years?

LW: I have not. And I would say – and again, I'm just going to call it how I see it – I was disappointed when I had my degree. I thought, "it's going to be hard to get a job." And as I look back on it, I don't regret having gotten the degree. I just feel that everything in Corvallis is so focused on Corvallis, they could care less what goes in the rest of the state, and I have found that very frustrating. But that's where I am on it.

CP: I wonder if that's – I would gather that people in this part of the state do feel somewhat isolated.

LW: We used to have an Oregon State picnic at Wiard Park in the summertime; they don't do that. We used to have an OSU Mom's Club; we don't have that. I have followed Oregon State athletics to a certain degree. I think the world of Coach Riley. I hope he does really well in Nebraska, I really do. I was in Nebraska this summer; Nebraskans are very

attentive and watching what he's going to do. I didn't realize Nebraska is not like Oregon, it has just one school, not two schools. And I just wish him well, I think he's a very good man and I don't know that he got the support from the state of Oregon – and, of course, Corvallis has not gotten the support like Oregon has. So, I don't know. Maybe some of my feelings toward Oregon State are built on that and I'm not really aware of it. I just know that I have friends here that, we're always betting on who's going to win the Civil War. And at the country club, its whoever wins up there gets their flag on all the greens all year. [laughs]

CP: It's been a long run for the Ducks.

LW: Yeah, it has been a long run for the Ducks. But anyhow, it's all in good fun.

CP: Well Linda, I really want to thank you for this. This has been really interesting and informative, and I appreciate all that you've done to make it happen, sitting through two interviews today and sharing your memories. I really appreciate it.

LW: Well, thank you for putting this together, particularly for my father. I think that's very nice. He was a very good man and it's nice to have him acknowledged.

CP: My pleasure.

LW: OK.

[0:39:59]