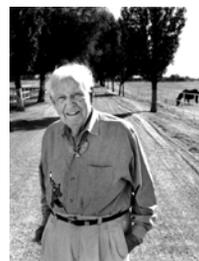




**TOM CHAUNCEY**  
1913-1996

**Honored as a Historymaker 1995**  
Entrepreneur, Rancher and  
Broadcast Executive



The following is an oral history interview with Tom Chauncey (TC) conducted by Zona Davis Lorig (ZL) for Historical League, Inc. on October 18, 1994.

*Transcripts for website edited by members of Historical League, Inc.  
Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Heritage Center Archives, an Historical Society Museum, Tempe, Arizona.*

**ZL:** Thank you for the interview Mr. Chauncey and congratulations for being named a 1995 Historymaker. That's quite an honor.

**TC:** It is a great honor and I'm very flattered.

**ZL:** Would you begin by telling us where you were born and where you spent your early childhood?

**TC:** I was born January 20, 1913 in Houston, Texas. We almost immediately moved to New York City or in that area, and from there I don't think I've lived in any particular place for the first number of years. My father traveled. He was the United States Representative for a number of factories, and in those days, they had the territory--in his case, was the United States the environments of South America and Alaska, so he traveled an awful lot. Of eight children, I think two were born in the same state; the rest were all. My first memory of any community of any size was Chicago in 1919, in that area. I would have been six years old. That was Armistice Day, November 11, 1919. I was a six year old youngster. I remember quite a bit about that.

**ZL:** Do you?

**TC:** Yes. There was a great flu, there was so many things. Practically all of the vehicles, there were very few motor driven anything. It was all horses and of course I loved horses. My first memories in Chicago were big, huge buildings that had horses that would go up ramps and circle around them with cleats and they kept the horses in town. But practically everything was horse drawn and that was fascinating to me.



My father with all the kids, he decided he wanted--by then there was seven or eight, I was next to the youngest, he wanted to put the kids out in the country so they bought a farm in Knox, Indiana. It was a little farming community. Very pretty. Seventy some miles east of Chicago. Anyway, we went to Indiana. They had three cars and it looked like a caravan. He always had two or three of his brothers live with him. He was the older and of course my mother took care of all of them.

**ZL:** Your mother must have been an amazing woman.

**TC:** She was an unbelievable woman. My fondest memories of my mother and some of the hardest memories was a huge tree in the yard. This place was ten or twenty acres, a farm, and she made her own soap. She had these huge skillets--tubs, bigger than wash tubs--black iron, and she made the soap with which she did her laundry. There were no ringers. She had the sheet and stuff for all those people and I think at home most of the time...When I was six, she probably had her eight children plus three or four others, so she was always cooking and cleaning house for twelve to fifteen people and never had any help, ever. She was a saint. But I can still see her out under a tree. They built a fire under these big black tubs. They boiled the laundry and then rinsed it. If she could find the kids, she'd get them and they'd get on the ends of the sheet and twist them. She hung everything on... I don't think my mother ever went to town for anything. She just worked. That's all she knew. It was terrible. She had a lousy life. She was a great woman but my father was never home. He was traveling in the United States and those countries. That's a huge territory and in those days there were no airplanes to speak of so you drove every place. He usually had a driver because he had cataracts. She ran the house as well as the other because he was gone most of the time with all those boys and all that family, she had a tough job.

**ZL:** It was a little farm. Did you raise anything?

**TC:** We raised cherry trees and vegetables and just general farming.

**ZL:** Food for the family.

**TC:** Yes, and we sold some of it. Corn, carrots, beets, onions, all the regular staples. The only thing we bought at the store was flour and sugar. Most of the other stuff--she made everything. She was just about fifteen when she married my father, and of course she had nothing but kids every year. But she was a workhorse. She loved her children obviously and she loved him. They were happy that way, but my mother did nothing but work. Terrible. I resented it.

**ZL:** Women had a very hard role in those days.

**TC:** It was a very hard role and they were not appreciated. Not at all. The foolish things. Things were all geared to the men and their activities. The women worked and waited on them. It was a lousy life for a woman and that was my impression when I was six, seven years old. I didn't like it. I think I resented the way my mother was treated.



**ZL:** Do you think that's what shaped your views on including women in the news?

**TC:** I'm sure of it, yes, absolutely. It was terrible the way my mother was treated, but she had more influence on me and my brothers and sisters than anybody. My father didn't have any influence on them, he was gone all the time. He was a good man, but it was the nature of his work. And then when there were any activities, the women were somebody to wait on them. I resented all those things. I firmly believe and I've always believed from the time I was a child that women are twice as smart as any man you'll ever know. They just are smarter. If you don't believe that, go to any school room with the kids and see who's doing what. At those very young ages, the girls are smarter. The guys won't admit it but they're nuts if they don't believe it because it's fact. They just are smarter. They had to be to put up with them. (laughter)

**ZL:** Now you came to Phoenix at quite an early age.

**TC:** Thirteen.

**ZL:** Would you tell the story of how you came to Phoenix?

**TC:** I came on a freight train. My brother who's a year older and myself. He was fourteen and I was thirteen and it was November. Bitter cold. Very cold winter. We got on the freight trails out of Dallas, we were living there temporarily. We came to Phoenix and I had a brother who was assistant manager of the Adams Hotel.

**ZL:** Who was already here?

**TC:** Yes, he was living here. You have to remember that the Westward Ho had not been built and anything north of those were almost farmhouses in the rural areas. Goldwaters had a house there, Doris Eiman and those people but there was nothing above Roosevelt just country, farms and land. It was a rural community of approximately twenty some thousand people. Central Avenue was called Center Street. Of course it was the bootleg era. There was a lot of it in Arizona. I remember somebody talking about whiskey--how old it was or something, and they said it was nine miles, it came from Glendale. (Laughter) Right at the corner of Central, Center in those days, and Washington there was a jewelry store and I worked there and I finally, through Carl Hayden, Senator Hayden who's a very dear friend, he lived at the Adams. Most of the laws of Arizona were passed in the old Adams Hotel. They'd go out and ratify them or whatever they did at the capitol but no laws were done there, it was all done at the Adams.

**ZL:** Most of the legislators from rural communities.

**TC:** They all stayed there. That's where everything happened and as a page boy, as a kid they took me in. They liked me, a youngster. Senator Hayden used to come and sit--every hotel in those days had what they called the bell bench so the employees could sit down when they weren't working. Senator Hayden would



come down every night when he was in town and he'd sit down at the bench with us and he'd talk to me. He tried to figure out why I'd be working at such a young age and how I got there. Of course my brother was the reason for that. And he said to me, "What are you going to do about an education?"

**ZL:** Tell us the freight train story first.

**TC:** How I came to Phoenix?

**ZL:** Right.

**TC:** I was thirteen and my brother fourteen, Beau decided we were going to Arizona and my brother was at the Adams Hotel which was the center of Arizona.

**ZL:** Now he had written you.

**TC:** No. We just got on a freight train and came. We had no plans. My mother would have killed me. We got on a freight train and it was the worst trip I ever had. I was scared to death. We got as far as El Paso -- freezing cold, bitter cold and we had no money and you lived in the hobo jungles. They were nice to us 'cause we were kids. They'd cook stuff in cans and if they caught you playing on the trains, they'd hit you on the knuckles and knock you off. It was a terrible ride. Anyway, we got as far as El Paso in November and they had a blizzard. When I had to jump off the train, I got hooked in the back with my coat and just tore it up. I was freezing. We walked into town to try to get some soup for some food and there was a Salvation Army store. We stopped and try to get a coat and they said no. It took me a long time to get over to where I supported Salvation Army when I got some money because that experience was terrible. They were absolutely nasty to us, these two kids. I was freezing to death. They had coats and stuff up there for twenty cents, thirty cents. I didn't have twenty or thirty cents. It was terrible. Anyway, we stayed out in the railroad yards until we could get a train out of there. We got as far as Mesa, the other side of Mesa, Chandler I suppose it now would be and then we couldn't get on the trains anywhere. We couldn't catch them. They didn't stop slow enough so we walked. We walked to Phoenix. I remember going by Phoenix Union High School. In those days they had several thousand students but it was the only high school in the whole Valley.

**ZL:** It was very large.

**TC:** Huge. Van Buren ran from there to about Seventh, Fourth or Fifth. As we walked by there, I swore to myself, I'm going to stay here the rest of my life no matter what I do. I'm going to try to get an education but I'm not going to go through this again. We walked all the way across town and got to my brother's house. It took us about three days of soaking to get the crud off of us and we were hungry. It was really a wonderful experience in spite of the hardships. It taught us a little bit about responsibility. One of the most interesting things of the trip was the Bulls, they called them. They were officers of the railroad. They locked everybody up in Nevada, at Elko or Yerington, I remember those names and they locked



everybody in these little bitty rooms. There was not room hardly enough to breathe.

**ZL:** How many people?

**TC:** Probably thirty. One big black man--he was huge and he watched me and my brother and he said to me, "Where are you going?" I said, "We're trying to get to Arizona." He said, "Well you can't." He said, "When they open, they're going to open this door sometime tonight after all the trains have gone through. If you're fast, you can get on that one train, otherwise you've got to walk thirty miles across the mountains to get to the highway where you can hitch your way." He said, "If you kids will follow me, I'll help you get out of there." He had lunch meat and stuff and he fed us. And that's how we got out of that place. I guess they're still looking for a place to get out of it. But it was quite an experience as kids.

**ZL:** And have somebody support you like that.

**TC:** Yeah and have a black man that has nothing sharing his food and everything and his kindness. It's rare. In those days you didn't call them black people. I was always taught they were colored people, anything less than that was undignified, always used that as a child. It's changed a lot since then but they don't like the word colored. In those days that was pleasing to them. But it took us about eight days to come from Dallas to Phoenix. Now it takes about two hours on a plane.

**ZL:** So then you were working as a bell boy at the Adams.

**TC:** I got to work at the Adams as a pageboy. My brother, Beau worked there and my brother George, all of us worked there. Senator Hayden would come down on his visit and he said, "Tom, how much education -- are you going to school?" I said, "No, sir." He said, "You need to go to school. You need an education, you have to learn something." He said, "If you continue the way you are, someday [he went over to the desk where the clerks worked] you might have a job behind that desk, but that's about as far as you're going to go. You need an education." I don't know why but I said, "Senator, do you know how much money I made today?" And he looked at me like I was nuts and he kind of laughed and said, "No, how much?" And I reached in and showed him a couple hundred dollars, one day's tips. Oh hell, the Senator doesn't make that much in a week, a month. And he said, "Oh I can't believe this." I said, "Well that's what I make every day." He said how much do you keep of it?" I said, "None." He said, "You either better get a trade--learn how to do something, go to a school of learning and get a formal education, but you cannot, you'll never be successful if you don't learn to do something." But he said, "There's a lot of things you can do but standing here at this hotel being a pageboy is not going to get you anything." He said, "You ought to think about it." He kept after me 'till I quit the job and I went down to Mr. Friedman at Center and Washington at the jewelry store and I said I want a job. I was a little kid, I was small. He said, "I don't hire bell boys." I said, "I'm not a bell boy, I was a pageboy. I'm a pageboy." He said, "You don't give change." I said, "I give change." He was inferring that I kept all the money. He said, "Why do you want a job here?" I said, "I want to learn jewelry. I like jewelry." Anyway, he hired me. I figure if you like something, you like to work at it. I was there twenty some years. He treated me like a father. He fed me a lot. He was very



good to me.

**ZL:** What did you first do there?

**TC:** Swept the floors, cleaned the silver, all the menial jobs he could think of. The windows were sixty foot long and I had to get in and clean them in August and there was no air conditioning. Lloyd Eisle had a bakery in the basement, that was Holsum Bakery and they had those damned ovens they cooked in year around. That bakery then had glass holes in the sidewalks and they were open and they had the pies and all the stuff out there and they were full of dirt, but they delivered all the stuff by wagon. It was just miserable. The temperature in that jewelry store had to be 150 degrees. They had no cooling of any kind.

**ZL:** Did anybody come in and shop when it was that hot?

**TC:** Sometimes you'd take in a dollar in a day. It was the heart of the Depression.

**ZL:** It's amazing he was able to stay open.

**TC:** Very few. There was nobody in town. You could shoot a canon down Central and Washington and wouldn't hit a soul. It was just too damn hot. The Indians would come to town but that's about it. There's an old picture in there on that wall I think of Center and Adams. (voice of Linda is heard]

**ZL:** Didn't Mr. Friedman kind of test you to see if you were honest?

**TC:** Yes. He sure did. He would lay money out and take it and put it some place. [voice of Linda is heard] They're looking at the picture of Center and Adams.

**TC:** That's Center and Adams. None of those buildings are there anymore.

**ZL:** It's a great picture.

[Linda has to go but reminds him to tell story about him taking a debt that he had and it turns out to be Paradise Valley Country Club]

**TC:** These buildings that you're looking at [of course none are here anymore]. This is the old First National Bank Building, This is the Phoenix National Bank Building, this is the Heard Building, this is the old Adams Hotel, the original Adams, this was the Busy Bee Drug Store. You can tell by the cars the years. This was probably in the late 1920's. None of this stuff is here anymore. There's the jewelry store right there. And I did everything that you could do in there. I cleaned silver, swept the place, washed the windows. A real great experience for a young man.

**ZL:** Now did you design any jewelry while you were there?



**TC:** A little, but I learned to make jewelry.

**ZL:** Did you watch the Navajos?

**TC:** No, mostly they were Mexicans.

**ZL:** Oh were they?

**TC:** Yeah. A lot of Mexican-Indian artisans. There was a fella named Pablo Moreno who had eight or nine kids. He was quite an artist and a jeweler and a watch maker and a manufacturer. Like all of those people, they love children. I think I spent every Christmas and Easter with those Mexican families and they'd take me home. They didn't have much and that was pretty generous of them to take an extra person in to feed. But they're wonderful friends. They were very good to me.

**ZL:** But they're very sharing people.

**TC:** They shared their philosophies, the decencies of life-- things that are important to behave yourself, to respect others, but in a nice way. They don't ever lecture you. It's always with love and kindness.

**ZL:** And example.

**TC:** Yeah. They were wonderful. I've stayed friends with them for a very long time. They're really bright people without any formal education whatsoever. I remember Pablo Moreno came walking in the store one day and he had nine kids with him. They looked like stair steps. His wife, and I'd never met his wife, I knew them but just on Christmas. In those days, I'd go out and eat with them. I said, "Where are you going with all those kids?" He said, "We're going to go get married." They had nine kids and they'd never been married. They're not the least bit-- they walked down to the Court house, bought their marriage license and got married and they wanted me to go with them. (laughter) They were interesting. Good solid people. Loved music and they're very decent people.

**ZL:** Well then Mr. Friedman died?

**TC:** Mr. Friedman had come out here on a train from Minneapolis. He came from Minsk in Russia as a young man and he had tuberculosis. He was in the jewelry business in Minneapolis or St. Paul, in that area. He got ill and had tuberculosis and came here on a stretcher. They took him off the train and he started this jewelry store and he got completely well. He was about sixty-five or seventy and he was on a trip to California and they had a new big Packard. They went off the road. In those days you went by Yuma and it was a two or three day trip. You cross on the border across the desert sands. Somehow they missed the curve. There was a curved road, it was night, and they went off. He died as a result of that. He had been just like a father to me. But when I first came there, he'd leave money in different places, unlikely, and I'd



be cleaning up and getting all these boxes out and junk out and here would be a five dollar bill or a dollar bill, always some money. I'd take it and give it back to him. I finally got tired of it and I said, "Listen, you old son- of-a-bitch, I want to tell you something. If you want me to steal something, put something out worthwhile. I'm not going to take that junk that you keep putting out, and I'm tired of giving it back to you." He laughed. He was just like a father to me. And he tried it a lot of times. In all the years he was in business, I was the only one that had a key to that store. Later after he was very old, his daughter Blanche, who was married to Judge Charles Bernstein, Justice Bernstein, she had a key after he died, but I was the only one that had a combination to the safe.

**ZL:** She was married to the Judge?

**TC:** Charlie Bernstein, yeah. Blanche was valedictorian of Phoenix Union High School. The safe had all kinds of old stuff and like a kid I was always going through it to see what I could find to do something with or make something. I found this piece of paper that said "Past Due" or "Due" "Will be Sold at Auction". There was some land that was going to be sold for one hundred and sixty dollars. I took it over to Mr. Friedman and I said, "Look, they're going to sell this on you, you're going to lose it." He said, "It's not worth it." He said, "One Hundred and Sixty dollars, we don't have one hundred and sixty dollars." That's when it was going to be sold in a month or two and I kept worrying about it and I thought well, one hundred and sixty acres of land and one hundred and sixty dollars, that can't be. So I finally took that paper over and I took the money out of the cash register and marked it and went over and paid it, paid the taxes. Got it off of the roles. That was good for eight or ten years in those days. There was no money. Anyway, years later after he died, they sold it. That is now Paradise Valley Country Club land--that one hundred and sixty acres. That's what that family lived on all of their lives, the daughters, from that one piece of land. But there were no roads out there, there was nothing. He was quite a man. He was very good to me.

**ZL:** So then you started your own jewelry store.

**TC:** Yes. I started a store right across from Diamond's Department Store. Exactly where the Phoenix Symphony is now, 206 East Washington. It went to a family named Luffy and had little stores. I had a 10 feet wide by about 30 foot deep, was nothing. I had a friend by the name of Roy Hine who later became the City Manager. Roy Hine had a lumber and wrecking company and I went down to his place and we built the showcases down there in his junk yard and put them in that store and that's when I started the store up. That was in 1940 I think. But the war came along. These air stations opened all over the country and business just boomed.

**ZL:** Well it really changed Phoenix.

**TC:** Oh, overnight. Overnight.

**ZL:** You've got Luke Air Force Base, Williams Air Force Base.



**TC:** Luke, Williams, also Marana, you had Thunderbird one, Thunderbird Two, those private places. It was all military. And that changed the whole face of Arizona, just overnight.

**ZL:** And your business started booming?

**TC:** It was unbelievable. I didn't have much merchandise. The people that I had known and worked with as a kid for Mr. Friedman all those years, gave me the merchandise to start with because I didn't have any credit then, I had no rating, and they were very good to me that way. I remember Parker Pens and Shaffer Pens. I knew Mr. Parker from the Parker Pen Company and he'd give me the pens. Every shipment we'd get they were limited. We were sold out the first day. And those kinds of things and also watches. It was very tough to get any kind of good merchandise. It sold as fast as you could unpack it. overnight the business was successful. But it wasn't anything I did really. It was just the times.

**ZL:** You were in the right place at the right time.

**TC:** An influx of people. Tremendous. I went out to get a ride in an airplane the other day, to test drive it because I was interested in it. I'm about to get another airplane. I've sold my other one. This fella came from Wichita, Kansas and he said to me, he was the chief pilot on this plane, "Mr. Chauncey, you don't remember me but," he said, "I want you to look at this." And there was a wedding ring I had made for he and his wife when they got married fifty some years ago. A small world department. Very nice guy.

**ZL:** What a great story.

**TC:** It was just wonderful and he picked me up at the ranch and brought me down here. That was a small, small world department. The Adams Hotel was the center of Phoenix. If you were there, you were in the center of the universe. You were here and this was it. The other places were interesting but the Adams Central.

**ZL:** When did you open your jewelry store at the Adams?

**TC:** Nineteen forty, and then the war broke out.

**ZL:** Okay, so your little tiny store.

**TC:** Was down on Adams Street. I was sitting down there just struggling getting along. I was making a living but that was about it. I had four kids. John Rockwell and his mother owned the Adams Hotel, the Adams Family. John's grandfather was J.C. Adams and Jack Kane who was my boss, he was the bell captain when I was the page boy came down to see me one day and they said, "Look, we want you to move." I said, "Move, hell I can't afford this place." He said, "Well we want you to come down here. We've got a place for you. We want to put a jewelry store over there, we think you'd do all right.11 So I went over and looked at it and I said, "Oh, I can't afford it." He said, "You don't have to pay any rent until



you make it." Anyway, I moved over there. I found some show cases, fixed up a very pretty store right off Central. And in those days, the Heard Building the Republic and Gazette was right across the street and everybody was--well the main law offices. And then later the Professional Building was built which is now there part of the old Valley Bank, now Bank One all came along but you just knew everybody from that Adams Hotel. And that's how I got started. The jewelry business was very good to me. It was not a big store, but it was a quality store.

**ZL:** And by that time, were you designing a lot of your own jewelry?

**TC:** Yes, manufacturing it and designing it. We had a shop and a couple young people who were very good artisans and we made a lot of things. Our principal business though were platinum and diamond jewelry and gold, fine pieces and diamonds, color stones. In those days, people didn't know what a star sapphire was. Never heard of it. It was amazing, the evolution of the jewelry business. It was a very fascinating time and all because of the friendship of the Rockwells and Jack Kane. I had a lovely store. Very pretty store.

**ZL:** And that opportunity probably gave you the reason to meet a lot of people who came to Phoenix.

**TC:** Every day, everybody who was anybody came to the Adams Hotel. It was just that central.

**ZL:** And is that where you met Gene Autry?

**TC:** Oh yes. Gene came there. Gene wanted to be in the air force but he had to have a license so he paid his own way. He had to learn to fly and entered as a sergeant as a flag sergeant. He wouldn't take an officer's job. He was smart too I thought for that, but he was terribly popular and they were bringing those people in, a lot of them, and giving them officers roles. Gene himself said no. So he came there and a fella named Bill Marsh, which is the head of Marsh Aviation. . . Marsh Aviation was owned by Walter Bimson and a few of the people around town that helped start to put him in the business became Thunderbird One, Two for the military. Gene came over and took lessons and then went in the service and he flew the hump and the -----forever. But he came out still a non enlisted. He was not an officer. But that's where I first met him. Gene Pulliam came to town in those days. He wound up with the newspaper and right there meeting after meeting, Gene Autry, Gene Pulliam and a bunch of others from the Republic and Gazette, Wes Knorpp and Charlie Stauffer. That was it. It was the center of everything. Gene Pulliam stayed one of my best friends till the day he died. He was a marvelous roan. He had a lot to do with the growth of this community. And of course the Valley Bank right next door where that building came along later, the Professional Building. The growth of that whole area. It all started and stopped right there at the Adams.

**ZL:** While you were still in the days when you were not making very much money, your family was getting started. Would you tell the story about when the twins were born?

**TC:** They were born December 31, 1940 and early in the morning I went over to St. Joseph's Hospital



which was at Fifth and Van Buren in those days and of course you knew everybody over there, the doctors and the sisters.

**ZL:** Did you know you were going to have twins?

**TC:** No. Heavens no. Anyway, I'm over there trying to figure out how I'm going to pay these doctors and the hospital and everybody else and I arranged to pay a dollar a week to the hospital.

**ZL:** And what was the total bill?

**TC:** It couldn't have been a hundred dollars.

**ZL:** But that's still almost two years.

**TC:** That's right, but they stayed there. The twins stayed in that hospital for a couple months because they were premature. They were only seven months and they were purple. Both of them weighed less than three pounds. Two of them, Sharon and her twin. Very healthy fortunately. Dr. Henry, Hank, Running and her doctor was Preston Brown who became world famous. I traded him a set of silverware for his fee. He was elated too. He didn't have any money either. I paid Running by the dollar and I paid the McCreary, the McCreary Family drug store, I paid them a dollar a week on their stuff called Oleo pocomorphim. Some kind of junky stuff the kids had to eat every two hours.

**ZL:** Would you say that name again?

**TC:** Oleo pocomorphim. I don't think I'll ever forget it. I paid for it for years--three, four years. It was a sodium or soothing milk for children. Dr. Running said, "You have to have this, they're just too premature." They've been very healthy and a joy for us.

**ZL:** How fortunate.

**TC:** Yes, I am.

**ZL:** There was a story you were going to tell when you first came to Phoenix about Bobby Robbs.

**TC:** Bob Robbs' father, Mr. A.B. Robbs owned Robbs Trust Company and he was manager at that particular time for the Adams Hotel. John Rockwell's father had passed away and Mr. Robbs was the resident manager and my brother was the assistant manager and managed the operation of the hotel. That's how we came there. The Robbs lived in the hotel, the family. They had a son named Bob Robbs who became a tycoon around here and owned everything. Nice family and Bob and I have been very good friends forever. He's probably a lot younger than I am but not much. I was thirteen or fourteen, he must have been five or six. The lobby was as big as this ranch, it was huge. And he'd run through the lobby



lassoing people, tripping. He was a little kid, a spoiled rotten kid, just terrible and he was irritating the customers and the guests. I was trying to get him to behave and of course he don't behave, he's the boss's kid. I got tired of it one day and I grabbed him by the back of the neck and I drug him out in the alley, I took the lid off the garbage can and turned him upside down and put him in it and put the lid on and came back in the lobby. Everybody kept saying, "Well you're through, you're a smart little jerk. You don't have any sense doing that." They said, "That's the boss's kid." I said, "I don't care who he is, he's bothering everybody and people don't like it and he's a nuisance." Bobby tells this story himself. Nothing happened for two or three days and then Mr. Robbs came in. He always came in around ten or eleven o'clock and go to his office. They said, "Here he comes." He was coming down that long lobby, a block long almost, and he came up to me and he said, "Young man, I want to congratulate you." He said, "You've probably done that kid a lot of good, he's needed it for a hell of a long time and I want to thank you." And he turned around and walked away. Everybody's mouth fell wide open. That was the end of that. I thought sure as hell I was fired. (laughter by both)

**ZL:** In 1941 you and Gene Autry bought a radio station KPHO.

**TC:** Yep, KPHO. It was down on Buckeye Road.

**ZL:** How many radio stations were in Phoenix at the time?

**TC:** Three. That was the third one.

**ZL:** KOY...

**TC:** KOY and KTAR.

**ZL:** You were the third one.

**TC:** KPHO. And we had that for quite a while.

**ZL:** Now were you hesitant to go into that business?

**TC:** Very, very hesitant. Scared to death. I didn't have anything. I didn't have any money and Gene was busy in the war and he was going off and he said, "You've got to do this." He said, "Somebody's got to run this thing." I said, "I don't know a damn thing about a radio station." He said, "You can learn." So anyway I did. I stayed in there and we ended up with seven radio stations and two television stations.

**ZL:** Now did you still have your jewelry store when you went in to this?

**TC:** Yes, for a long time.



**ZL:** You must have been awfully busy.

**TC:** Yes, I was. That's fun when you're learning and you're young. I was never home. I put in long hours. I'd go down to the station at six or seven in the morning sometimes. But there were long days. They're good days when you can see the fruits of some labor coming along and an opportunity. Of course the town was growing. Broadcasting is a fascinating business.

**ZL:** How did you learn about broadcasting?

**TC:** I don't know. I really don't. I think it's just natural. It's not hard. You listen to it every day, then you've got to figure out to put it on the air.

**ZL:** Well, you have such broad interests. Just your whole spectrum of how you learn fascinates me. Are you a voracious reader?

**TC:** Yes. Newspapers. I read every--particularly the Republic and Gazette morning and evening, and I'm very unhappy if I don't get them and I don't read them. If I'm gone, they save them for me and I go page to page. I've always been that way since I can remember. I think newspapers are a marvelous thing. Even better than broadcasting and that's saying a lot for me.

**ZL:** It definitely is, yes.

**TC:** Newspapers, you remember it, you can go back and look it up. You can save.

**ZL:** So did you read trade magazines on radio and television?

**TC:** Oh yes. But the best trade magazine is "do it". Just go in there and work.

**ZL:** OJT, on the Job Training.

**TC:** That's exactly right. One of the great things about this country is that business is wide open. You can learn about almost any business you want to get into. I suppose that it either had to be a brother or a nephew or a kid in the old days of Europe and these other countries that passed on some things. That was no secret. It was just the only way they could learn. Of course education, schools changed, but still, generation to generation, the knowledge was passed on. But people in the business community ... If you're willing to work--of course the best thing to make you willing is to have to, it's necessary to eat--if you're willing to work, and work reasonable enough, you can find a job. You can learn something. And they will teach you. It's not secret how they run any business anymore. Papers are full of it every day of how to run this or how to do that. It's not difficult. Actually radio was simple. It was very easy. There's a transmitter. It was not hard. Television when we got into to that, that was difficult.



**ZL:** Now you and Gene Autry were pioneers there because you brought the first TV station into Arizona.

**TC:** Right. We were pioneers, yes. We were pioneers in radio also. Very early in radio.

**ZL:** Yes, you were but I mean in terms of TV you were the first.

**TC:** Right. We were.

**ZL:** That must have been exciting not only for you but for the general population.

**TC:** It was very exciting and very tough. We lost a lot of money. If it wasn't for Walter Bimson of Valley National Bank, we'd have been out of business twenty times.

**ZL:** Is that right?

**TC:** I went to the bank to Walter five times in one week to get money to make the payroll.

**ZL:** But he believed that eventually.

**TC:** He believed in me. He liked me and that was the difference. I went to him one time for a lot of money and he said, "Your papers don't show that you can do this." And I said, "No, they can't." I said, "They don't look good, but I can tell you if you'll give me this money I'll pay it back and I'll pay it back on time." A lot of things were happening in this business. When they were looking at figures, there were no You couldn't sell any time. Which comes first, the chicken or the egg? It was difficult.

**ZL:** That's one thing I really want to know. Who did you see advertising to in those early days?

**TC:** Practically nobody. (Laughter) Preachers once in a while. It was tough. Used cars were big customers.

**ZL:** But did you sell like food products?

**TC:** Everything. Grocery stores, name identification. But in the beginning it was not easy. We had a hard time selling it.

**ZL:** And how many TV's would have been in homes? There wouldn't have been that many.

**TC:** The cost per thousand was ridiculous. It wasn't the novelty of it all,--and there wasn't much of a picture either.

**ZL:** And the sets were very small.



**TC:** Tiny. And not very good. The quality of the pictures were not good.

**ZL:** What kind of programming did you have?

**TC:** Musical, old motion pictures. They weren't shot and made for television. People would watch darn near anything that you'd get on the air, but we were on shorter hours too. We just didn't have the programs.

**ZL:** Do you remember how long you were on?

**TC:** Yeah, we started at six in the morning and went off at midnight.

**ZL:** That's pretty long.

**TC:** That's pretty long when you had to fill a lot of time. But we had an awful lot of live cooking shows. I had a good cook that could talk and a camera. Not much studio stuff. You could take one camera and make a pretty decent show.

**ZL:** They weren't in to talk shows in those days.

**TC:** No. They had home economic shows, cooking, gossip. We had a gal in Tucson and a gal here. The gal here was Anne Enke. She later went up to Show Low and had a huge restaurant up there and was in business forever. She was very popular. And we had a gal named Virginia down in the Tucson station and that was "Visiting with Virginia" and she was very good. Virginia Mittendorf came from radio.

**ZL:** Transferred.

**TC:** Just transferred. And she stayed there. She's still in Tucson but she stayed there until we sold the station. She was there forever. She was very good. But that filled a lot of time. She sold time, she did everything. It was an exciting time.

**ZL:** And then in June of 1955, the station joined CBS.

**TC:** Of course that made a world of difference because it gave us a lot of programming and gave us revenue. Our relationship with CBS, mine and Gene's was magnificent. Those people, Mr. Paley, William S. Paley founded CBS, his father owned La Polina Cigars and he felt this thing radio was going to be something great. And he and Dr. Stanton were giants. They would have done it in any industry. They're brilliant men. They just took me under their wing and helped me. They're marvelous. They gave us our first camera too. Big companies don't do that. This was a huge outfit, but they were very good to us.

**ZL:** So you learned a lot from them.



**TC:** Oh, you bet. Every time I had to go to Chicago or New York I'd go sit down with Mr. Paley or Dr. Stanton and they always had the time and they always helped. And they helped us with ideas and they'd loan me their programming people, an unbelievable amount of talent.

**ZL:** Was Gene Autry a hands-on partner?

**TC:** No. No. He was too busy.

**ZL:** So it was basically yours to run.

**TC:** Completely. I had complete control.

**ZL:** You didn't even have to check with him on decisions.

**TC:** No. Never. Not a one. We had a great relationship, forty years, over forty years. No, we never had a problem of any kind.

**ZL:** When did you start broadcasting news, local news?

**TC:** Right away.

**ZL:** And was it a half hour...

**TC:** Small news department, but yes, we started immediately because I always felt that if you're going to have--the one thing that stayed that way all the time I was in the business, news was the number one thing. Information. And you'd better serve the public.

**ZL:** Do you remember who some of your first reporters were?

**TC:** Yeah sure. Bill Close, Bill Lester...

**ZL:** So they were there from the very beginning?

**TC:** Well no, but they came in.

**ZL:** Okay.

**TC:** Close and Lester both came in. Close came in when we first went on television but he was with KOY in those days. And Lester was KOY. But it goes way back. And a fella named of Ralph Mainer, he was the whole film department, one person. Frank Snell was my cameraman a couple of times. We went to San



Francisco--we put on a war college. People don't even know there's a war college, but there is a huge one. We put on one here in Phoenix and thousands of people--Army-Navy War College, and we had to go to San Francisco to see some of the people. Frank and myself and a gal at the Valley Bank, Mildred May, who was really a bright lady at the Valley years ago, took Ralph because I wanted to do some filming. Frank did all the. They had a story to do up there live so Frank took the camera and held it for hours. It was a great era. Frank Snell was a great man. There was a lot of interesting stories went on in those days where we had helped people, reached in and helped people.

**ZL:** This is jumping ahead a number of years, but Mary Jo West was the first female anchor in the Valley.

**TC:** That's right. She was damn good. I kept saying to our people, "There are no women on the news. They're half or more than half of the population." They know the stories and they're bright. We need someone here. Besides they're a hell of a lot better looking than men. But I felt they were smarter. I still think they are. They're the backbone of most businesses. You look behind most every businessman, I don't care who he is, you'll find a gal or two or more in those offices. Look at Frank Snell and that lady that he was married to when he died. Mary Jane, she's lovely. There's no question about it. They were the nuts and bolts. They were the glue. And so we started looking and I used to watch an awful lot of television. All night long.

**ZL:** You mean you couldn't sleep?

**TC:** No. Trying to pay bills. Anyway, I said, "Look, we've got to get some gals on this stuff." So somebody told me, "There's a girl over at ASU, Channel Eight and she's pretty good. She's from Georgia I think." I said, "Well, get her in here and let's test her." So they did and they'd been testing other people. The minute I saw her I said, "Hire her." They said, "Wait a minute." I said, "Hire her." A few days later, I said, "Did you hire that girl?" He said, "No." I said, "Hire her and hire her now before we go home tonight. I want to know if she's coming to work. And we want her on the air next week." They said, "You can't do that." I said, "We're going to do it. You're going to get her on the air." And she was great. There was no risk. She was that good. Mary Jo can take a piece of copy and walk down and study it and go on the air live in two minutes.

**ZL:** She's very talented.

**TC:** Oh, she's extremely talented. She was too talented. She got mixed up. She was mentally--heavily involved in everything she did to the extent that it hurt her, but she always had a great soul and a good heart. She's a decent, good human being and worked like a horse. Just unbelievable work. She was a cinch to be good. So we were lucky to find her. She's as good as ever came along. We really were. But the guys thought I was nuts.

**ZL:** Well you're a risk taker.



**TC:** I did the same thing with Pyburn. Remember her? And she was good. She decided to stay home and take care of her kids. I was at home one night and I saw some kind of a beauty thing and she won. She was from Georgia too. I came down the next day and I said to Bill Close who was as pig headed as I am, I said, "You call so and so. There's was a gal on television last night on the, I forgot which one of those beauty shows. She'd be good if she read something. So it went on for a week and nothing was happening. I finally asked her to come down. I said, "Now this is no discussion. You get a hold of that girl, now." They hadn't tried. They thought the old man was nuts. So come to find out, spring training was starting and her boyfriend was going to try out here for one of the major leagues, so it was a good time they could both come to Phoenix. So I said, "At least get her out here." We hired her. She was good too. But none of them are as good as Mary Jo. Mary Jo is unbelievable.

**ZL:** You had so many friends in Hollywood, did you use that kind of as a model for some of the things you tried in television?

**TC:** Oh yeah. Some of them to my detriment. There were some of those people that we're friends of course, and the way I got into that was between my brother and myself, we were the motion picture board.

**ZL:** Now tell me exactly how that started. A governor appointed you.

**TC:** A governor appointed. . .

**ZL:** Which was the first Governor, do you remember?

**TC:** The first one to appoint was Sid Osborn I think. I'm not sure but we were on it forty years. My brother in Tucson and me up here.

**ZL:** Just the two of you?

**TC:** Oh yeah. We paid our own way, we never had any budget. We had worlds of business. I felt that if the people benefitted by it--hotels, restaurants--the benefit of a movie company coming-- they spend millions, that there's no reason that they can't foot the bill for at least part of it. I didn't think the people had a right to do anything less. The motion picture people, when they wanted a group, they wanted a ranch, they wanted people, they'd come to me in Phoenix and my brother in Tucson, mostly because he was at it most of the time. But he was in the transportation business. When a motion picture company would come, they'd rent fifty limousines, they'd rent all these transportation things. There was a fortune for them.

**ZL:** And they were making a lot of movies in Arizona in those days.

**TC:** Oh you bet. They brought them all here. Nick Hall was the manager of the Pioneer Hotel, the Santa Rita in Tucson, and then John Rockwell of course, the Adams and my brother was there, I was here. The three of us, but mostly Nick and my brother did the work. I had other things but then when they wanted



me, I helped. I didn't do that much, but that's where I met Gene too.

**ZL:** Oh through that Commission, okay.

**TC:** The Adams Hotel again. All of us started there.

**ZL:** I'm sorry, I interrupted you. You were talking about you met these people through the Commission.

**TC:** Well that was it mainly and also they came to the Adams Hotel to stay. They'd put them up at the Adams Hotel.

**ZL:** And so sometimes you'd be influenced by them in your television.

**TC:** Oh yes.

**ZL:** But you said it was a detriment sometimes.

**TC:** Well I hired one over there and I wanted the camera man and people... There was no model to work from for a small station. We were pioneering. So I went to Hollywood to the people that knew the business and I had some unbelievable people working here who wanted to try it. But they did it the expensive way. If you wanted to set a nail, you had to have a guy with a union card to do that and that created a lot of problems because we couldn't afford all those extra people.

**ZL:** You weren't a high budget operation.

**TC:** We had no money. There's no budget, there's nothing. You've got to have a budget--you don't have any money--you don't have a budget. But we survived and they were friends and they helped. They understood as quick as I did that if it wasn't for them the studio was a different story. There's so much money involved over there. But I had a lot of wonderful friends. They were as interested to find out what went on. Merv Griffin--I just thought of this--but he's been a friend of mine now for thirty, forty years. I was sitting in my office one day and he called up and he said, "Tom, this is Merv Griffin." I said, "Yeah, how are you?" He said, "I need a favor." I had just started in the television business, and I said, "Fine, what can I do for you?" He said, "Well, I've got a show, The Merv Griffin Show." And he said, "I can't get it on the air in Phoenix." I said, "When do you want it and where do you want it and what time do you want it?" He said, "I want it any time I can get it, and I want it now." I said, "You've got it. We'll put it on the air." Well we've been friends for life. He never forgot. But from that putting him on the air, and putting that show on, got him started where he's the most successful syndicator in the United States. He developed "Jeopardy", "Double Jeopardy", the "Merv Griffin Show", of course. He developed "To Tell the Truth", "Wheel of Fortune". All those shows were his and of course we had them when we got in because he said, "My shows go to Tom Chauncey whenever he wants them." He never forgot.



**ZL:** Which really helped you.

**TC:** Oh it all helped. I had a lot of friends in that business. They were interesting. Dotty Lamour, we've been friends for fifty years I guess. She's just a nice gal and we became very close. She has two sons, one's named Tom. She was married to a very socialite family's son by the name of William Howard III from Boston or Philadelphia, mainline families. She's just a hell of a nice woman. She's my age and she was gorgeous. Of course then Crosby and Hope, I met them through her. Paramount was our favorite studio. It was mine and George's both and we did more work for them. We got a dollar a year.

**ZL:** From Paramount?

**TC:** No, from the studios.

**ZL:** Or from all of them?

**TC:** It wasn't very lucrative but it certainly brought a lot of business.

**ZL:** Now you did a lot of work for Disney too, didn't you?

**TC:** Yes. Mostly on one major picture. He was here at one time and he was here for months. We went out every morning at five o'clock in the morning.

**ZL:** What film was that?

**TC:** Uncle Remus, "Song of the South". It was a fascinating time. He was a fascinating man. Disney was really a lovely man. If it hadn't been for television, that company wouldn't exist. They were broke. He was too perfect. The picture we made that I worked with him on, every morning at five o'clock we were on the set and stayed there. We were there waiting for the right clouds. In those days, they tied the clouds in. By tying in you had a big flash shot and you did the scene in front at the studio. He wanted those clouds natural, live and so we waited for these big cumulus clouds for months and went out there every morning and he ran around the place with a sling shot playing, creating, and we're all sitting there all day.

**ZL:** How many people?

**TC:** About a hundred and some. See Disney was broke when television came along. He was just perfection and he's still perfectionist. He had all the film. But think about it. There's nothing to date a movie from Disney in those days. Nothing dates animation. The cars are the same so they were ageless. They're still good. But NBC bought a lot of their stuff and it pulled him out. But he was a very delightful man. Boy he was creative.

**ZL:** Channel 10 was unique because you did a lot of innovative things, especially documentaries.



**TC:** Bill Miller. Bill Miller was one of the brightest men that ever hit the television business.

**ZL:** Where those ideas his or...

**TC:** His.

**ZL:** His. But you gave him the...

**TC:** I just gave him the right to do them and I listened to him and we did them. But it was his in almost every case. A few were mine, but most of them came from Bill Miller. He was a kid when he came in there and he's bright. You know where he is today? He manages Channel 3 for McFarland's family, for Jewel. He's an absolute genius but the nicest young man.

**ZL:** You produced documentaries on unwed pregnant teens, drug abuse...

**TC:** We were innovative.

**ZL:** Conditions in South Phoenix. How did people react to those?

**TC:** Some of them they were angry, some they accepted, some thought we shouldn't do them. Most of them were grateful. They were gratifying things to do. They were terribly expensive.

**ZL:** Were they?

**TC:** Oh yes. They could have broke us. But there again, Bill's innovative ideas. He had Bill Leverton and those guys, Bill Miller, Maury Elly, he's a master, but we really had a crew. We had the only major film company within a private television station. We were entirely separate and independent from the other. All under the same management. They had their own crews and had everything. We did Copper Cavalcades and those shows, and they were all good ones. Lots of talent. And Mary Jo did a lot of the stuff for us. But most of it was Bonnie Leverton, Bill Leverton, of course Bill Miller and then we had great voices. Bob Davies, very talented, Bill Close, Jack Ware, and Mary Jo. We had a couple other gals in there at that time too. We had quite a few gals in there doing those shows. That was a pretty mixed group but they were very good. And it was very expensive to do. But it's what made us the leader.

**ZL:** Did some people try to talk you out of doing that kind of documentary?

**TC:** Oh sure. Sure. We went to the inner city. People didn't know that they had people that didn't have toilets. People didn't know that kids were running out without any underwear on. People didn't know that the feces were along the sidewalk right in the heart of Phoenix. People didn't know that that existed. But they damn well should know. And I think that was the reason that we didn't have the fights and the trouble



on the streets. Milt Graham, we put him on camera. . .

**ZL:** Who was mayor at the time, of Phoenix.

**TC:** Yes. And he was great. We stopped a lot of riots. Close riots. You can't hold people down. They could see that somebody cared. Some of those early meetings were just disastrous, just horrible. You felt terrible when you got out of them. I had to meet with them at six and seven o'clock in the mornings.

**ZL:** Now this was to do the documentaries?

**TC:** Yeah. Nobody had ever bothered to talk to those people about what's going on down there. And they were resentful of us going in there stirring it up, so they said. Well we didn't. We presented both sides always. Always. Everybody had their own say. But we didn't try to be God. We weren't playing God, we were just plain people and as it is, as it was, and where it was. Bill was the guiding light to that. Homer Lane was masterful in a lot of the... He was a wonderful man. He was with me thirty-two years. I had a gal by the name of Audrey Herring. She was with me thirty-some years. She did everything. She was involved in the documentaries, she was involved in the news, she did everything and did it well. She kept the glue together. She's a marvelous woman.

**ZL:** When you owned Channel 10, the company gave bonuses at Christmas and you also had a profit sharing plan which was begun in 1960. Was that a common practice in those days?

**TC:** No. Those people work awfully hard. Long hours. There's no such thing as Sunday off or Saturday, if they need it. No. They worked. We had work to do so we worked, and that was the kind of staff we had. Even when it got to two or three hundred, it was that way. I felt that those people--we were so poor for so long on money that when we started making it, we ought to share it. It was simple. There wasn't anything great about it. It's just something that should have been done. I'm very happy we did it. It gave a lot of them a nest egg.

**ZL:** Eventually, Gene Autry tried to purchase some other real estate properties and the TV station went into hock? Is that right?

**TC:** No, I don't want to talk about that.

**ZL:** Okay, that's fine.

**TC:** Yeah, he sure did but that doesn't serve any useful purpose.

**ZL:** One of the areas in which you pioneered was in televising Presidential debates (chuckle by Chauncey) which started with Kennedy vs. Nixon. Why did that take so much effort and why were so many people opposed to the idea?



**TC:** Did you ever try to amend the Constitution of the United States? That's what we had to do. You could not have a debate because of the laws. The Constitution says all these nice things: Right of Free Speech, Right of Religion, but nobody ever said that you couldn't give them time. If you gave a donkey time on the air, you had to give it to every donkey in America. You had no sense of judgment. But the main thing was that the cost was getting so high. In those days, it wasn't near what it is now. Dr. Stanton, Mr. Paley and a number of other people--they made me chairman of a committee, a group and we went in to Washington and we started trying to get the constitution amended. It was just absolutely unbelievable. Dr. Stanton was unbelievable... and a lot of his people were...

**ZL:** A master at this.

**TC:** He was a master. A brilliant man. In fact, see that gun?

**ZL:** Yes.

**TC:** Read the name on it. It's hand-made silver and gold.

**ZL:** She reads inscription. It says, "To Tom Chauncey, the 207 Bulls Eye Blast Without Reloading. From Two Grateful Competitors, Ed Bunker and Kidder Nees. (He adds while Zona is reading inscription, "They were CBS people").

**ZL:** She continues reading inscription. August 24, 1960.

**TC:** That was the Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. That's what that was for. You know, they give me a lot of credit but Dr. Stanton and those guys; Bunker, and those people, were brilliant minds put together by Dr. Stanton and Mr. Paley, but mostly Dr. Stanton.

**ZL:** Well how many months? Do you have any idea how long it took you?

**TC:** It was a couple of years. I had to testify before the--I was scared to death, a country bumpkin kid--before the House Committee on something, something to hang everybody or do something to them. It was terrible. I went there and they had one of these hot shot Washington lawyers and a bunch of them, and this fella came over to me and introduced himself and he says, "It's nice of you to come here." He was opposition. He said, "We appreciate your coming." He said, "Mr. Chauncey you'll be last because we don't have much. Your stuff is pretty routine and we know how you feel and we're not going to take much time." Well I came on last and they threw the books at me. They had a staff of questions that were nasty. They tried to destroy me but luckily I knew the subject. I'd worked with it and he got no place. He was really terrible. He just really tore into me. It wasn't even civil. But I survived it and we won and we got it passed and got it through and Senator Hayden helped--a guy by the name of Eisenhower, friends, you know. Had a lot of friends there, but it was tough. Really tough. People were afraid of it--whenever you mess with the Constitution, you ought to be afraid of it. But when you're in it working like we were and you saw how it



was stifling the information, well when the results are there, you can't hide under that tube. When you stand them up there and they start to question each other, if they want to be President of the United States, they sure as hell ought to be able to express themselves. In those they can't be experts at everything. I don't think of it as often as I used to but I was very fortunate to be able to get that done. But I didn't do it. I was just a very small part of a lot of people.

**ZL:** But how exciting to be part of that.

**TC:** It was terribly exciting.

**ZL:** Then in 1966 in February, KOOL TV became the first television studio designed for local color.

**TC:** The cameras to go to color from black and white was a major, major undertaking. Even to this day if you buy print, color costs several times as much. It's terribly high. I felt and still feel that color ought to be part of it and they shouldn't have to pay extra for it. To this day, television doesn't charge extra for color. Black and white and color is the same price. It's a little known fact. We did it and kept it that way. That's a frost you know. The only difference--the other is the color of the ink. We were very fortunate to...

**ZL:** What was the reaction of the public to that?

**TC:** Of course the minute you see a color picture there's night and day. It really was tough because it cost us a lot of money and damn near broke us. It was lot more expensive than I thought. I'm not much of a detail man. Ideas yes, but then I worry about how I'm going to get the money later usually. That one was very costly. The cameras alone were--the tubes were seven, eight thousand dollars apiece.

**ZL:** How many would you have to have?

**TC:** A lot of them, and then they didn't last long. The equipment, the tape machines were half a million dollars, where the others were a couple hundred dollars. But the equipment was just atrocious in cost. But it was so much better. I still have that tube.

**ZL:** Do you? The first color tube.

**TC:** Uh-huh. It's up at one of the ranches. I think it's at the John Wayne Ranch up at Springerville. It's hanging on the wall up there.

**ZL:** Then KOOL TV was the first station to offer a one hour news program.

**TC:** Well that was selfishly motivated because we could do a lot better with news than we could with violent programs and it was a lot cheaper. We were able with the staff we had and the groups. We got more of them on the air and we were able to do it. Nobody thought you could do it. I can remember when they



didn't think you could run fifteen minutes of television news. No, an hour was quite an innovation. It was very good for us.

**ZL:** I read that one of your goals was to display a sense of fairness on the air. How did you make sure that your staff accomplished that?

**TC:** Well you fire them if they don't. (Laughter by both) That's the surest way to get it done.

**ZL:** Did your opinions on politics and politicians change as you worked in the news media?

**TC:** No. They're the same son-of-a-bitches as they ever were-- most of 'em. There's a few nice ones and a few scoundrels. They're human beings and they're a mix of people, but they're no different. I get a kick out of 'em. But no, I insisted that they be allowed a voice and the same equal time as anybody else, even if I didn't like 'em, if I didn't agree with 'em. That's not smart that's just survival. If you want to be a good station and you want to be respected, that's what you do. I wasn't any angel, it's just the way it makes you a better station.

**ZL:** Do you think the media, including newspapers, television, radio, all of it, do you think it's on a firm foundation today or do you think we're in danger of losing the free press?

**TC:** You'll never lose the free press as long as people are willing to stand up and be counted. I mean everybody. The kid on the corner, the grocer, the baker, everybody. Freedom has to be earned every minute of your life. Freedom of the press is freedom. Without that, you have nothing. Can you imagine Phoenix, Arizona without the Republic and Gazette? Now you don't agree with it all the time, but think of the difference if you didn't have that voice, that strong voice. They take some pretty tough. And now you have the Tribune, you have Glendale you have a lot of smaller ones in there. Without them this would be a lousy country. That's the difference. The first thing that happens in any country when the power changes, they take over the newspaper, radio and television quickly. The first thing they do.

**ZL:** How else are people made aware of anything?

**TC:** That's right, other than the newspaper, journals, it's not just newsprint. Those three: radio, television, and print. There's a lot of voices out there and they're voices you don't agree with, but you better let them do it. It's the only way you have freedom.

**ZL:** What did you think when they banned cigarette commercials?

**TC:** I thought it was terrible. I still think it is. If people want to kill themselves let them. It's awful. I don't smoke. I quit smoking. I smoked forever. When Ted Koop came along, he was a friend and I knew him. I wanted to kill him 'cause he was an egotistical, self opinionated bastard. I think in the beginning he thought it was going to make him successful and famous. That was my opinion. But I don't think the



doctors know to this day what the hell's good or wrong. I know that cigarettes are bad for you. They must be. Your heart and all the other things, but I don't think you have a right to tell anybody...Why should the United States Government charge taxes and collect money to support tobacco. Finance it, help them grow it, give them the money to grow it, and then tell you you can't advertise it? Uh-uh. Stop the Government money going to them, don't give it to them, cut it off because a few Senators in the south have it blocked? They should have stopped it. Then I think they ought to stop all the ads they find but not subsidize it with Government money--our money, your tax money, my money so that they can... It doesn't make sense. That's why they're able to get away with it. I think it's terrible for you. Evidently it is. I had open heart surgery about maybe twenty years ago and Ted Dietrich, his first year, they were going to run him out of town. I was on his first board. He sat one day and saw me and said, "Tom, you feel good?" I was tired, I was putting in awful long hours. He said you better come in and let us. So within a short time I was in there and they were going to cut you open and take your heart out and do all that bit. But they were going to run him out of town. So I went on the board and I worked like hell. We gave free time to everybody. But if they could have stopped it, you wouldn't have had a heart outfit like Ted Dietrich was on. The press helped it.

**ZL:** Why did they want to run him out of town?

**TC:** Jealously. Nothing else. Barrow Neurological. I was a founding member, an incorporator with Nancy Reagan's father, Loyal Davis, and John Green. They were going to run John Green out of town, the sisters. John Green started Barrows. He was the head of it along with--I was an incorporator--a fellow named Octagon and two or three others and Dr. Davis helped us, Nancy's father. But that's one of the great institutions of the world. There's only four or six in the world of that quality. The doctors--they just didn't want them. flamboyant. The same thing with Dietrich but Dietrich was more John Green was easier. But they fought Dietrich forever.

**ZL:** But you're a definite believer.

**TC:** I'm a strong believer. If it wasn't for Dietrich, I wouldn't be sitting here. He's a great doctor and he's a nice guy. And very handsome. Of course there's a lot of jealousy. None of us like too much change. And the doctors are afraid they're going to lose a lot. They didn't lose anything. We became one of the best heart places in the world. You've got them now at St. Luke's, you've got them at all these major hospitals now. I can tell you that they're doing some marvelous things in heart work. I'm eighty-two years old. None of my family are living. They're all dead. No brothers or sisters. Nobody. None of them lived to be seventy. None. Not a one. Most of them in their sixties. All died. I am the only one that went beyond those years and I'm the only one left. I don't have a brother, sister, mother, father.

**ZL:** When you had your heart surgery you quit smoking?

**TC:** Absolutely. And I started to tell you that that night that Dr. Dietrich and Dr. Kinert walked into the room--I always had pajamas, I'd have two pockets 'cause I wanted two packs of cigarettes and I had a pack



in each, and they're looking at me and the room smelled like a sewer. Ted Dietrich said, "Tom, if we could show you tomorrow when we open you up and show you your lungs and that charcoal and how bad you look, you'd never smoke another cigarette." And I was smoking one and I looked at him and he said, "I'm telling you, you'd never touch one, if I could show you that. They're going to kill you if you keep smoking. We're not going to waste our time. I beg you not to smoke. You'll live longer." This was twenty years ago so I took the cigarette and put it out and threw the packages in the trash and never smoked since. But it was easy for me because I was so damned sick and under some medication for a while. It wasn't easy. It was impossible. It just damn near kills you when you quit smoking. When you smoke that much--five packs a day. Every day. I'd smoke in the middle of the night, all night.

**ZL:** How many hours a night did you sleep?

**TC:** Not many, but I got a lot of good ideas.

**ZL:** Two or three?

**TC:** Not much. No. I doubt that.

**I have no clue what she did here.**

**ZL:**

**TC:**

**ZL:**

**TC:**

**ZL:**

**TC:**

Not even that much?

No. Two or three hours. Like Einstein.

No. He was smart. (laughter by both) You could get by with that little sleep.

Uh-huh, a catnap.

**ZL:** And then would you crash? Oh you'd catnap?

**TC:** I worked. I did too much. I'm very fortunate to be able to do but I get tired now. Hell I'm eighty-two years old, I guess I'm supposed to get tired. It dawned on me one day, I thought Oh I'm exhausted, I can't



figure it out. I thought well I'm eighty-two, maybe I ought to be. But I never stop churning you know.

**ZL:** In 1975, KOOL-TV did a yearlong series of documentaries called "This is America" which focused on the positive aspects of this country. Was that concept your idea?

**TC:** Yes. We always did things like that, not called them that. Homer Lane, we did one or two editorials every day. Most of them were "up" and what's right about America. I'm sick and tired of everything negative about this country and the people. There's some great people in this country. A lot of them you never heard of, you and I never will hear of. There's a lot of good things going on. But if you just listen to the news and you get single minded and you like to be a grouch and everything's wrong, pretty soon you think there's never going to be anything good about this country. I think the press has a responsibility to hear both sides of everything. I think if I have any right with that profession and I love it, I'm grateful to be a part of it, is that we choose too much sad things and we don't seek out because nobody wants to hear them. It's not popular. But there's some wonderful stories out there about people who are doing... People in this town right now are helping somebody.

**ZL:** Well what kind of responses did you get?

**TC:** Very good. Very good. But it's a continuing and on-going thing. You can't shove, you can't force feed anything. You can't force feed decency, but you can encourage it. And that's what you have to do. Nobody wants to be told to do anything. I don't, you don't, none of us do. But you can sure.

**ZL:** Educate.

**TC:** Uh-huh. Of course that's the answer to all of it isn't it. And this gal is one of the brightest women I've ever known. She's brilliant. She's just got that, she's bright. She teaches four or five different classes. She's those kinds of people.

**ZL:** Why don't you give her name since the people listening to this tape wouldn't.

**TC:** Linda McCay

**ZL:** And she helps you?

**TC:** Yes. She just started to work for us. And she's a dear friend. In fact I go out with her once in a while. I like her very much. She's much too young for me but she's good company, she's brilliant. I like her mind. She has two children. She's had a horrible blow to her life but I think she's holding down about five jobs. One of those kind of things. But she's a nice gal.

**ZL:** In 1975, KOOL-TV produced a program called "Father Mountain's Christmas" and it won a lot of awards and was critically acclaimed. Can you tell what that was about?



**TC:** They're all about the same things--about people. That's really what it's about. Christmas is a wonderful time. It makes us feel special. It makes us feel important and we are important. We're important every day but it helps--I think that humanity needs to remember that they are special and that they do belong to a very great group. There's a lot of problems with all of us but there's a lot of good things about all of us too. I love Easter, I love Christmas, I love Halloween, I love any excuse to have fun I guess. But I think it says humanity is rather nice. If we don't remind ourselves of that sometimes, we're apt to forget it aren't we. We get too busy worrying about. . .

**ZL:** mundane things.

**TC:** Yeah. We spend too much time on them.

**ZL:** KOOL-TV in another pioneering effort, you were the first local station to offer twenty-four a day programming and that was in 1981. Were other CBS affiliates on the air twenty-four hours a day?

**TC:** I don't know. I don't know if they were. I just felt that we had a great facility, we ought to use it. And the first thing I had to fight with was our engineers and our technicians. They said, "You can't stay on that long." I said, "Why the hell can't you?" They said, "Well you can't." I said, "Just buy some more equipment if you can't. There's no reason that we can't stay on." They said, "Well we have to be off X hours." I said, "Bull." So somebody wants to awake in the middle of the night, they want to see something. If you can't do anything else, you can do some religion, you can do a little bit of everything, but you've got to keep it on the air. You're not using that facility. You've got an abundance, you've got so many hours you ought to use it. It was just practical. No genius or anything, and it worked. It was very popular. You wake up in the middle of the night, what are you going to do, you can't find anybody to talk to, you best just as well turn something on and enjoy it and you can also educate. Shows that are limited to small groups, people who are not mass audience, that isn't productive. It's productive in the middle of the night. There's a lot of things you can do. Pretty scenery, pleasant things, travel logs.

**ZL:** Maybe slower paced type shows.

**TC:** You don't want to get up and do boogie-woogie or something.

**ZL:** I don't know if you want to talk about this story but in 1982 a gunman, Joseph Billie Gwin, burst into the studios of KOOL-TV and held Bill Close who was the anchorman at that time, hostage for five hours.

**TC:** He held a gun to Louis Villa's head for five hours, who was magnificent.

**ZL:** And you weren't even in the studio at the time, right?

**TC:** No. I went down there.



**ZL:** You were home, you were out here?

**TC:** Out here and I went there as quick as I could get there. Got through all those police and sat there with the Assistant Chief of Police. See we had to make a decision to eventually let that guy go on the air with all that junk. I finally decided to let him talk.

**ZL:** He wanted to read a statement.

**TC:** That's right.

**ZL:** I mean he wanted Bill Close to read the statement.

**TC:** That's right. It was a terrible time. But Bill was marvelous, Luis Villa was marvelous, that whole staff was marvelous. They just went about their business. I'm proud to be a part of that group I'll tell you.

**ZL:** Of course those of us who were watching only saw Bill Close.

**TC:** They were wonderful, all of them. Everybody there--the secretaries. They handled themselves just masterfully and the City of Phoenix Police Department. We're fortunate. It could have been disastrous. Do you know that son-of-a-bitch was out on the street in three or four months?

**ZL:** Really?

**TC:** Yeah. His name was Billy Joe Gwin. I'll never forget him.

**ZL:** Nothing ever happened?

**TC:** No. Apparently it was all right cause he hasn't done any more of it. But Bill Close was--they were all good.

**ZL:** But of course those of us watching saw Bill Close and he was so wonderful.

**TC:** That poor guy with the gun at his head you didn't see that either. That was solid right there for all those hours. One at Bill, one at Luis. It was tough.

**ZL:** Did that change your security down there?

**TC:** Not much.

**ZL:** Didn't it?



**TC:** God if you have so many people, people are what makes things work. You can't isolate, you can protect yourself but you cannot just put yourself in a lead box I suppose, and then you're not safe. We're a business of people. We didn't change much. You might get a nut in there once in a while, but they'll get in some way anyway.

**ZL:** Then you sold the TV station in 1982?

**TC:** I don't like to think about that. That was the saddest day of my life.

**ZL:** Was it?

**TC:** That without a doubt. Just terrible. It was a very sad day. It was kind of like a child. You've taken it from nothing, you had nothing, and all those years the wonderful associations, the things that went on and the good you can do in the community and the help you can give and still be successful. Television and radio broadcasting is a wonderful business. It's hard work. Those people put in awfully long hours. It's full of talented people, interesting people, bright people. I was very unhappy but I had no choice. That was the most dangerous time of our lives I guess, mine and Homer's. They threatened they were going to kill me.

**ZL:** You had death threats?

**TC:** Oh yes. Yes indeed.

**ZL:** Why?

**TC:** They wanted me out of the way. I wouldn't buckle down. I fought it for several years. I was told that they'd kill me. I one on for I don't know how many years after. That was not my reason for agreeing. I'll tell you, those take overs are terrible. But see we were probably one of that kind of quality of a station. It was that strong a station. Privately owned and privately operated. Community owned. Think about it. There's nothing run from here, they're all run from someplace else. The only one left here is McFarland's station.

**ZL:** That's right.

**TC:** Jewel and Bill Lewis.

**ZL:** Which has now lost their ABC affiliation.

**TC:** That's so terrible after forty years for good service.

**ZL:** This upsetting the apple cart of the...



**TC:** It will be a mess for a long time. Some of them don't have the same signal strength. Some people won't be able to get the stations they want and the shows they want. It's a mess. But it's another long story. It'll work its way around. There's so many diverse ways now to get programming that it'll live through it, but it'll be it's going to be tough. I hate to see New York or the money people running the information stations. It's wrong. When we--Homer Lane and myself and a fella named Dick Rawles who was the manager of KPHO which was Reredith in those days, Dick Lewis who was KTAR which was Channel 12, got together and we took our engineer which is Al Hilstrom and we put literally--did all the engineering, designing and planning, we put Channel Eight on the air. Competitive but yet we felt that it ought to be done and that's the reason that we have an educational station, as good as it is. It's not what we planned. I think they should have more education on there, I don't think they need those movies. They can get all them any place they want. There ought to be more education but there's some damn good programming on there. They're a good station. They're well run and we did the engineering, the design, the whole planning and in Tucson.

**ZL:** I didn't know that was a collaboration.

**TC:** Strictly ours. Nobody knew a thing about it. And we worked well together. It was fun. A lot of arguments about it, they said, "They're going to be advertisers. I said, "Oh no they won't be." I was their dreamer. They don't need advertising on there. They shouldn't be begging. They'll either be advertising or not.

**ZL:** What year did they go on the air? Do you remember?

**TC:** I don't know. It seems like forever ago. And I'd forgotten about it 'till somebody mentioned it. Homer and Al Hilstrom, one of the best engineers in that business, he was marvelous, we did all the work. Made the application, got it in and did it. It didn't cost them a nickel.

**ZL:** And what a help to the universities.

**TC:** That's a good station, well run. I think if they have a shortcoming, it's that they're not doing a thing for the lower grades. They need more educational programs for kids. But they're hard to do unless you do it in cartoons or something, but you can do it. If I had my way, and our original plan was that they'd have X--I think if they'd go back and find all those papers, and we spent lots of time, they'd find segments of the day that would be for grade school, high school. There's nothing for those grades.

**ZL:** No, there isn't.

**TC:** Educational. If you can teach people to communicate, how the hell can I communicate if they don't speak the language. If they come to this country, they better learn to speak English, grammar or they're not going anyplace. They'll always be a ditch-digger or something. If you go to Mexico, you better learn to speak Mexican. You're not going to go anyplace. There's all these people that come here, they don't have a



prayer. They're going to be doing the same thing for--I sound like Carl Hayden, don't I? (laughter). But it's true. They need to be able to speak and they should speak English in America.

**ZL:** Let's switch to ranches and the ranching business. You owned three ranches in Northeast Arizona. Is that right?

**TC:** Five.

**ZL:** You have one by Winslow?

**TC:** Two.

**ZL:** Two south of Winslow.

**TC:** Right.

**ZL:** One by Springerville?

**TC:** Four by Springerville.

**ZL:** And you own John Wayne's Ranch up there?

**TC:** That's Twenty-Six Bar. That ranch has a great history. Before it was John Wayne's it was Milky Way Farms, Ethel Mars, Milky Way, M&M Candy; Thornton who was Governor of Colorado later; and then John Wayne and Louis Johnson; then Karl Eller had it for several years when he got in too much trouble, too big; so I finally bought it from him. And we'd added three different ranches to that. Then the Winslow ranch Gene and I had for thirty-four years. I bought all of it later and then I bought the other half, but those were the old Hashknife Outfit from Holbrook to Williams, Henry Mountain. So that's that ranch. I have wonderful ranches.

**ZL:** And then your very first ranch was up by Mayer.

**TC:** Yes, that's the small ranch but it's the exact geographic center of the State of Arizona. We had a camp there called Camp KOOL that we had all our kids and employees. Every year they had summer camp and Marje Injasoulian was the head camper. She's the Bishop's right arm now and I thought that it was such a good place for my children that I gave it to the YMCA anonymously. It's still operated and they have thousands of people up there. They only pay what they can or they don't pay anything. It's a lovely ranch. It's an old ranch.

**ZL:** Didn't I read that if the YMCA ever gives that away or tries to sell it they lose it. It's for families and kids.



**TC:** That's it. And if they don't operate it that way they can't have it. I get tired of seeing these things they've been given and then they're turned into commercial things. But that will always be that kind of a place.

**ZL:** When did you become interested in ranches?

**TC:** My family, way back, were dirt farmers. My father had I don't know how many brothers. My father's father and they came from Great Britain some place. Some of them went to Georgia, some of them went to Texas, and some of them went to Boston. And those families in those days were primarily farmers. The ones in Texas were dirt farmers. That happened by the way in East Texas where all the oil is. They never found it but it's there. My father was an early . Georgia was backwards country, just farm families. It's just in my blood. I love animals and I love farming. I like to see things grow. I can't think of anything more precious than to plant a seed and watch it become a flower. Beautiful.

**ZL:** Which breeds of cattle do you raise?

**TC:** Herefords. White faced Herefords. British breeds.

**ZL:** Only Herefords. You never got into...

**TC:** Never.

**ZL:** And they're registered.

**TC:** Uh-huh. A lot of them are registered and a lot of them are commercial. Mostly registered.

**ZL:** And how much time do you spend on the ranches?

**TC:** Not enough. Not like I'd like to. I had an airplane and I

was able to go there oftener, but I sold it a few months ago. I'm trying to get another one now.

**ZL:** But have you in the past spent a lot of time?

**TC:** Yes, I used to go up there every summer. I would come to the ranch that's the YMCA camp for kids. I'd go up Friday night and come back Monday morning. Monday morning I could leave there and I would be in the office by 7:00. I was there early every morning. I went up every weekend for years and built that ranch. It was kind of run down.

**ZL:** Who did you buy that from?



**TC:** Bill--it was an old, old family ranch next to Orme School, it adjoins it. I can't remember their name now.

**ZL:** But the ranches south of Winslow and by Springerville, have you ever spent lots of time up there?

**TC:** Yes. As much as I can. But I have great management there. A young fellow that came out of--he and his wife went to the UofA Ag School, she's a teacher, and they've been there forever. He really runs it. I try to go up a lot and if I get a plane again, I will. That road to Springerville is rough. All those people killed the other day again. That's a disgrace, that road. It badly needs to be rebuilt. But it's the most beautiful drive in the world. But people don't go up there and drive sensibly. There's been an awful lot of people been killed on that.

**ZL:** Is your land, you obviously have some patented?

**TC:** Both.

**ZL:** And then you have state BLM, I mean state land plus BLM.

**TC:** No BLM. Forest. The State land, the Winslow ranch is a little more than half deeded. That's what they call checker boarded. That's the biggest ranch. It's about 180,000 acres.

**ZL:** That is a big ranch.

**TC:** Yes, huge. It's two hundred miles around it. More than half is deeded land. The other half is forest--no, state.

**ZL:** With the state lease?

**TC:** The Springerville ranch is all of the deeded lands, the river and water and meadows and all that are all owned privately. The water rights go back one hundred and some years. It looks like Switzerland. It's unbelievably beautiful. Headquarters are just two miles out of Springerville, so it's a beautiful ranch. But it's five miles in a car, beautiful ride if you drive it but nobody drives it like it ought to be. It's twenty-two minutes in the plane. You get spoiled.

**ZL:** Five hours in the car?

**TC:** Yeah. Hard driving.

**ZL:** It is.



**TC:** But twenty-two minutes in that airplane. Forty minutes on a small plane.

**ZL:** What do you think about the controversy over increasing the grazing fees?

**TC:** Well it's apples and oranges. It's a difficult thing. What they don't realize is how much money is spent in improving that land. If the United States had to have somebody go in and do what ranchers do for that land and have historically, water improvement, fences, they'd be broke. But they don't get any credit for that. What I would like to see happen, I'd like to see the changes. But that money that comes in for the grazing to go into that ranch improving and fix it for recreation I would like to also at the same time see people that want to go in there and camp, let them pay for it. They dirty it up, they're the ones that cost the money and ought to be cleaned up. If they lease, they ought to pay for it. If they don't want to pay for it, if they have families and don't have the money, then let them go in and spend labor, working time. But it's somis-blown the way it is. They do pay more in some areas. And some areas there's abuses. Those abuses ought to be stopped. And we know who they are. They know who they are too. They should not be permitted. It's ridiculous.

**ZL:** What are your sources of water on these ranches?

**TC:** Little Colorado River water runs right through the ranch.

**ZL:** At Springerville?

**TC:** Yeah. And it makes a fantastic place. Runs right by the front yard, and gorgeous. And the Winslow ranch has wells and windmills from way back and of course rain and dirt tanks. They're all water rights that go way back and those rights belong to the people that own them. This business of letting people come in there and tear them up and cut the fences down and tear all this up, they shouldn't be allowed to do that. Here again is abuse. It's expensive to maintain a ranch properly. But there's some changes that should be made too. But the ranchers know who that is. Mr. Friedman that I worked for as a kid, I said to him one day, "Mr. Friedman, how do you learn diamonds, I want to learn?" He said, "Put your own money in them." (laughter) I remember the first piece of jewelry I bought I had a hell of time selling it and I remembered what he said. I've never forgotten it either. If your own money's in it, if those people want to use that, they ought to go down and clean it up and help. They can't just go in there for nothing. They can contribute. Then it's worthwhile. You know the things that are most precious to you are the one you work the hardest for.

**ZL:** Isn't that the truth?

**TC:** If you have kids you know. You put a lot of effort in those kids. They're the most precious thing you have, aren't they, even though you want to kill them sometimes.

**ZL:** Absolutely right.



**TC:** They can just drive you nuts, but you still love them. If you could only tell them, you could save them so much trouble.

**ZL:** Yes. That's one thing we humans haven't learned how to do.

**TC:** There's no way I guess. In fact it comes back to where we're human and the kids are human and they're going to make up their own mind. But one thing they need a lot of is love. And if they know you love them, they'll generally come out pretty good. But boy it's hard to love them sometimes.

**ZL:** Takes a lot of effort.

**TC:** Yes it does.

**ZL:** I think you've done some research on your ranches like with grasses and probably how you move the cattle around?

**TC:** Uh-huh. Rotation. We had the first brucellosis free herd in Arizona.

**ZL:** Oh, did you?

**TC:** First one, which means that you have to sample, test those cattle two or three times a year for a number of years, and that was the beginning of this brucellosis free state. But we had the first one. But I think that's just common sense. You've got a herd of sick cattle, you can lose all of them and it's important. You take care of your kids, you take care of your cattle. The cattle are out there roaming around. If they get sick, you can lose a whole herd.

**ZL:** Do you use the rotation method?

**TC:** Uh-huh. Oh yeah, rest and rotation. But that's conservation, that's self-preservation. You can't just use up any of everything. If you've pumped too much water, your well's going to go dry, then you have none. If you've cut the grass too much, but you have to do a certain amount of it to get it to re-grow. The forest, that's such a long, drawn out thing, but it's a fun thing. But if you would thin those trees out and let the sunlight get to them, you'd have more growth. They plant them-- you can't even walk through them. But if you thin them out, the sun hits them--if you put a piece of paper over a plant it dies. No sun. It's fun to watch the things that can happen.

**ZL:** Yes it is. When did you get interested in Arabian horses?

**TC:** I met a girl.



**ZL:** Seriously?

**TC:** Yeah. I loved horses all my life, but I never could really afford an Arabian. I thought they were pretty, I loved them, but they were too small in my opinion. They were tiny and that was the inbreeding because they didn't want to spend the money to bring the studs. There's a whole story that went with it. I saw a horse at the Biltmore one day. I was over there for some kind of a charity affair. I saw this girl riding a big, red horse who happened to be horse named Warda. Gorgeous mare, huge, Arabian. Matter of fact I didn't know that.

**ZL:** Didn't know they were ever that large?

**TC:** Turned out to be Deedie Wrigley and we were married after. But yeah, our herd we don't breed the small ones. We have small horses as a group that we like to look at, but our breeding is all--and not to get oversized, you have to watch that too, but what happened is too much inbreeding and they lost certain genes and strengths. It's very scientific. Breeding is difficult. We were fortunate that we got the right combination and I had the money to buy them, the ones we needed. On this ranch now, we have more of the top world class horses in the world than in any country. They're just that kind, U.S. National champions, World Champions, European Champions, magnificent horses. And they're all grazeable size or bigger, but they're not little. They're not ponies. Gosh they got them awfully small there for a while. Same thing they did with cattle. Dwarfism in a herd of cattle. Inbreeding, inbreeding, inbreeding. You have to introduce new bloodlines, new hybrid vigor or you're going to have midgets. That dwarfism, then they get ugly. But our horses, it's an unbelievable herd. This country has done a great job with the Arabian horse.

**ZL:** When did Arabians first come to the United States?

**TC:** Three, four hundred years ago, two hundred years ago I guess. They got the biggest group to come when I got interested in a few people. It was about fifty years ago. What happened was, through that group buying of the world's number one horses out of all those--see in the old days, the Government's owned those places and royal families. And then it got to where they took all that land and horses, Communists most of them, now they're going back, Russia still has their own. They had them all through Communism. One thing they guarded closely was their Arabian horses. Poland did a great job.

**ZL:** Well you bought horses from Poland?

**TC:** I bought them every place. Too many. But I had fun.

**ZL:** Now did you go to those countries?

**TC:** No. They had a fit 'cause I wouldn't go. I said, "I don't need to go. If I see a horse I want the horse, I don't want to see the country." I just don't like to travel anymore. I spent all my life trying to get a nice



place to eat and sleep and everything and everybody's trying to invite me someplace. I want to stay here and enjoy it. For God's sake, why the hell do I want to go someplace? Where can I go that I have more beautiful scenery? No place. I don't have to go somewhere. The horse they can send it over here and I'll buy it if I like it.

**ZL:** Probably your most famous Arabian was...

**TC:** Naborr. Mrs. Fowler McCormick bought him from Poland when he was fifteen. At the same time, Lasmo bought a horse called Bosque.

**ZL:** Who bought that?

**TC:** Lasmo. Over here. They're out of business here. They're in Texas. But Naborr and Bosque were two of the greatest horses in the herd, and they were both Polish. In the old days, they'd ship them by boat and an awful lot of them got sick and died. Airplane is the best thing that happened to those horses. You can ship them and they just do wonderfully well. Naborr probably was better known than most horses. Mrs. McCormick just didn't want anybody, didn't want to mess with anybody that didn't care about it. She happened to like me and I could see the horse, fell in love with it of course. When she died, she insisted the horse be advertised and sold at public auction. I was lucky enough to buy it. Nineteen years old, paid one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for it which was crazy. It was insane.

**ZL:** Wasn't that an unheard of price?

**TC:** Just a nut. I put a lot of money in an auction. Wayne Newton and I have been friends and partners.

**ZL:** You were kind of his dad, weren't you?

**TC:** Yeah, I still am. In fact he gave me this for my eightieth birthday.

**ZL:** It's beautiful. It's a bola tie that we're looking at. A turquoise eagle. It's wonderful.

**TC:** But he had to go to a show for General Motors. I went to the auction and we decided that we'd spend a lot of money, thirty thousand dollars I think it was. We'd try to buy that horse, partners, and raise him. Well he went to General Motors to do the show and I went to the auction and I ended up paying one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for it. A nineteen year old horse which is unheard of. Nobody wants one. It turned out to be a great thing and then Wayne called me the minute he got off his show. He said, "What happened? How'd the auction go?" I said, "Oh, it went pretty good." He said, "Pretty good? How much?" "Who got Naborr?" I said, "Oh he went for a lot of money." He said, "How much?" I said, "One hundred and fifty thousand dollars." He said, "My God, who bought him?" I said, "We did." (laughter by both) But I said, "You don't have to have any of your part of him. I want him, I'm glad I've got him." He said, "I'll be right there." He came down, I don't know how the hell he got here so quick, and he said, "I



want half of him." I said, "You can have half." our thirty thousand thing, went to one hundred and fifty in five minutes.

**ZL:** A slight increase.

**TC:** Yes it was. But it was worth it.

**ZL:** How long did he live?

**TC:** 'Till he was twenty-eight and still breeding. Marvelous horse.

**ZL:** Now you started artificial insemination with Naborr?

**TC:** No, I didn't start it but we were one of the first to do it.

**ZL:** Oh okay. But I mean in your operation he was the first one?

**TC:** Yes. We send it all over the world now, the semen. It's the best way. You don't have to ship those horses, they don't get hurt.

**ZL:** Eliminates a lot of danger.

**TC:** Yeah. A couple of daughters that like to work twenty-four hours a day. I don't worry about it. They do a great job.

**ZL:** So your daughters are now handling a lot of the...

**TC:** They're running it. When they catch me, I'll discuss it with them. I just enjoy it. They're delightful.

**ZL:** That's wonderful.

**TC:** There's some great horses on this ranch. Some Saturday at two o'clock you can come out and see them.

**ZL:** Now when did you start this--you used to do it on Sundays, right?

**TC:** That's why we changed it. A lot of people like their Sundays. They don't want to be tied to anything. So I decided we'd try it.

**ZL:** Right. Our kids don't want to work Sundays. But tell what you used to do on Sundays.



**TC:** Well we just decided that we would show a bunch of the horses and no advertising. We'd have as many as fifteen hundred to two thousand people out here and we've done that for years now. We've never charged for it. It's kind of a nice--part of it was selfishness on my part. If people wanted to see these horses all the time you can't pull them out every five minutes so I thought if we had a time to show them, the people could come and see them, it would be nice for them. A lot of them come from England and France or Germany, or wherever and they want to see these horses. So by having a time that they can come, it made it nice.

**ZL:** So now you switched to Saturday afternoons.

**TC:** Saturday because we figured our employees did not like Sunday. When you get that many horses ready, you try manicuring eighty hoofs, and grooming and cutting the facial hairs and all the things you do to groom a horse, it takes a lot of labor. So it's a long Sunday. Saturday, the kids like it a lot better. Then Saturday afternoon seems to be a nice time for people to come. We get just as many of the people and they like to do it. **ZL:** Do you want to talk about your veterinarian, Dr. Kris West? **TC:** Kirkland. Kris Kirkland was married to Jim West. She came here as a student at the University of Missouri and she was here twelve years I think. She graduated summa cum laude at Missouri and then from here after twelve years, she went for her post graduate to the University of Illinois. She just finished there for three years and got a doctorate, or whatever the hell it is, and she's summa cum laude. And now she's into surgery. She's now the surgeon at the University of Atlanta in Georgia, University of Georgia, and I think it's two or three years. She'll be summa cum laude. She's unbelievable. Very bright. Very brilliant girl. At that time, when she was here, we had two other doctors, veterinarians. I think both of them were gals too. I don't know what she'll do from this other one but she's way over qualified for us obviously. She's doing a lot of operating and surgery. Teaching surgery there. She's won many awards, national and international awards. We have a doctor here now that she recommended we use and she's marvelous but she's not full time and that we don't have that many horses either. When Kris was here, we had seven hundred and fifty horses.

**ZL:** On this property?

**TC:** The largest individual property of a breeding horse ranch in the world including the foreign countries. But she was a work horse. She's really a hard worker. But we're down to a nice size where my daughters can handle it. This doctor handles others and does ours. She's a very fine doctor.

**ZL:** What's her name?

**TC:** Dr. Nyrop, Karen Nyrop. Very bright.

**ZL:** One of the first you pioneered was an auction of Arabian horses and American and European nineteenth and twentieth century paintings and antiques.

**TC:** Sotheby.



**ZL:** And you did that here, right?

**TC:** Yes. Right here on this ranch. I made a deal with Sotheby and they came in. Beautiful catalog. They brought a lot of paintings and art work and we put it up here at the other end of the property. We did the horses and that together. It was a very successful event.

**ZL:** Must have been a fun event.

**TC:** It was a real fun event. All the jewels and the black ties. We didn't suggest it that way, but that's the way it worked out. But it was a very beautiful affair. And of course gorgeous horses and live orchestra. And they had some lovely paintings. The good paintings sold quick. And off the record I tried to tell Sotheby, I said, "Don't bring any junk here. This is no hick town. This is a cross section of people of the world. It's like the United States became, a melting pot. Arizona's a melting pot. And when you get in Scottsdale and all these areas around here and all these communities, you'll find that Tucson and all of them, there's some very unbelievably and knowledgeable people. So you're not talking junk." And they didn't listen. They brought some and they didn't sell a one of them. And all of the good things they brought, they sold. They were a little bit stuffy about it but I loved it. (laughter by both)

**ZL:** Okay, we were going to talk about your relationships with Presidents of the United States. In 1960, President Eisenhower appointed you as Ambassador to Nigeria.

**TC:** Ambassador to Nigeria and his Representative along with Governor Nelson Rockefeller.

**ZL:** And you wanted to take your wife.

**TC:** Well I don't know anything about Washington. I don't want to know anything about Washington, and I didn't know anything about Washington. I do know now that when the President of the United States calls you, you're supposed to answer the phone. But that's about all I know about it. These people--! thought Oh sure, sure so I got this phone call, I'm landing in Honolulu. I went over to Kauai and I was met by some people and they said, "Mr. Chauncey the White House is calling you." I said, "Another gag." But I decided I better call it and sure enough it was the White House. They don't make a call until they know you're going to accept. They don't want to be embarrassed. They don't make an appointment until they know you're going to accept. President Eisenhower for some reason liked me.

**ZL:** Now you must have met him previously?

**TC:** Uh-huh. Very fond of him. Wonderful man. Great sense of humor. Brilliant. Obviously a great mind. But he had a great heart along with all those other things. He knew that I was having a problem. Why I don't know, probably through some friend of mine. He appointed me that because he thought it would help me. The other reason he appointed me is that he knew I wouldn't embarrass the United States with blacks.



With my record of civil rights, I was comfortable amongst minorities. The guy from the State Department --I said, "I need to know what my wife is going to wear." He said, "Oh, she doesn't go." I said, "What?" He said, "She doesn't go." I said, "Look, if you want me to represent the United States, I have to go to all those social functions, I don't know a damn thing about social functions and I don't want to know anything about them but my wife does, and if she can't go I'm not going." He said, "Mr. Chauncey you don't talk like that to the President of the United States." I said, "I'm talking to you. You can tell him any way you want, but I'm not going." I said, "It's foolish, it's stupid." Well as it turned out, we had a big enough airplane to take forty people. Anyway, he came back and he said, "Mr. Chauncey, Mrs. Chauncey's invited too, so if you and Mrs. Chauncey will please come to the State Department for three days on a certain date and get acquainted." They flew us along with Governor and Mrs. Rockefeller. Well the Rockefellers were having a fight. They were about to get a divorce, that was Todd. She said to me, "You know I didn't know who were," but she said, "I thought you were some old goat with a lot of money." She said, "I'm glad to see some people we can have some fun with." She's a delightful gal. In the meantime, they're fighting and he's making passes at my wife every two seconds. (Chuckles) It was the damdest trip I've ever been on. We get over there and I get a call. He gave me the Air Force One, the whole damned airplane. Mrs. Rockefeller's telling Deedie about how she got to go because I raised all this stink at the State Department. So we had room. Anyway, we landed at the Azores. Well first, we got on Air Force One in Washington, my wife and I, and then we picked up the Rockefellers at New York. A gorgeous airplane. You can't even describe it. We went to the Azores and landed in the middle of the night of course and if somebody was waking me up I was half asleep sitting there and I had a nice visit with Rockefeller. Rockefeller was wonderful to me. I said, "Look, I don't know what the hell I'm doing. You please go first." That was crazy they put me first over him.

**ZL:** Now did they give you a training session?

**TC:** Three days, that's all. But they wrote the books. They shook me and woke me up and said you're landing at the Azores. Well this was about two or three o'clock in the morning and there's people out there saluting. Air Force One, the President, and all that, and the whole base is lit up. The whole thing. Everything's open, the canteens, everything open. Everything's shined and polished and the runways. And I came shooting out of there with my hair all mussed up and I started laughing and the guys laughed and they sent these cars with the flags and we went in. I bought about half a carload of whiskey to give to people. Two or three dollars a bottle, no taxes. But they were just delightful. But Rockefeller just kept shoving me up. He was just wonderful to me. Both of them. She was lovely.

**ZL:** How long were you in Nigeria?

**TC:** A week. Worst food I ever ate in my life. I wanted to throw up every time I smelled it, that palm oil. When you go to one of these big functions we're representing the President and then we're representing America with the Governor and the gal from England, she was representing the Queen. All these countries were represented. It was a wonderful state dinner. Nothing that I could eat. I kept shoving the stuff under second plates. And the foyers in the places, they'd have fresh fruit. So in my tuxedos I looked like I was a



woman. I had stuff stuck out of me all over the place. Bananas and oranges, that's all I had for a week until we got back on the plane and boy did I eat. But it was a great experience. I learned a lot. All of the people that I met in that country, Prime Minister and all, were beheaded within the year. All of them. The only country that they wouldn't let in there was the Soviet Union. They denied their participation. No Communists. So they took care of all of them. They killed them all. They're still fighting over there as you know. And that's forty years ago. But the President, he was just wonderful to me. He was a special man. He was fatherly. A nice man. Of course, the Reagans, we're very close. I love them dearly.

**ZL:** Now when did you get to know them?

**TC:** Forty years ago, I don't know. Before he was Governor. That's the Davis's, her mother and father. We're very close. I have great love and admiration for Ronald Reagan. He's a great man. I didn't know President Nixon very well but I knew him. He was aloof and difficult, but bright, obviously. I loved President Kennedy.

**ZL:** How did you get to know him?

**TC:** Well somebody, I think it was Joe Duke, Sergeant of Arms in the Senate. Senator Hayden was the first man who reached fifty years of service to the Senate and Congress. And they wanted to have a fifty year anniversary thing for Carl Hayden. He's a very good friend of mine so they insisted I be chairman. I didn't want to. I didn't think I was capable of it. So I got a fellow by the name of Jimmy Minetto. Jimmy Minetto was Count Minetto's -----, I made him my co-chairman. He didn't want to take it. He said, "I'll be your assistant." I said, "No. You be the co-chairman." And he knew all the proper things. We worked real hard and we had the White House Administration. We had the President of the United States, the former President of the United States, the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, thirty or forty Senators, a hundred and some odd Congressmen--all at one time in Phoenix, Arizona, the Westward Ho Hotel. It was a great affair. I sat there and visited with him for two or three hours. He still called me Mr. Chauncey. He still wrote me as Mr. Chauncey. He was the nicest guy. Really bright. And there were so many things that went on during that time. A place called St. Jude Hospital that Danny Thomas started, I wanted some entertainment and I had known Danny for a long time in the business so I called Danny and I said, "Danny, I'm having a dinner for a thousand people at the Westward Ho Hotel, and I'd like you to." He said, "That will be fifty thousand dollars." I said, "Danny, I don't have any money." He said, "Then you don't get Danny Thomas." He said, "I don't work for nothing." I said, "Danny, that's short sighted. That's wrong." And I don't know how but somewhere in that conversation, President Kennedy was mentioned. He said, "What?" I said, "What about it? Yeah he's going to be the honored guest." He said, "What time do you want me there?" And I said, "I thought you didn't do it for nothing? I'm not going to pay you a nickel." He said, "I don't want any money. I want five minutes with him." And I said, "I don't think I can do that." He said, "I think you can do that. You're the head of the thing." I said, "Danny, I'm not going to do that." He said, "Well, do you want me?" I thought about it a lot and I said, "No. I don't want you, you're too hard to get along with." Well I called a lot of people and couldn't get them, so I called him back and said, "You win." But I said, "All I'm going to tell you is I'll ask him. I'm not going to promise you." So anyway, he



came and he was lousy. He was scared to death appearing in front of the President. Danny Thomas was never scared. He wasn't scared of a mad bull, but he was scared, and he did a poor job. But anyway, I asked the President, I said, "Mr. President, Danny Thomas--I made a deal." He said, "What was the deal?" Of course he loved that. I said, "I told him if he'd come and entertain you, I'd give you five minutes with him." He said, "All right." So he said, "Now when we go upstairs," I said, "I'm not gonna." He said, "Yes you are, you're coming upstairs with me when this is over and we're going to visit." He said, "You bring him with you, cause they have the Secret Service." So I hollered at Danny and I drug him along and took him up there. He had been trying to reach the President of the United States and talk about St. Jude's. Danny started St. Jude's. He had been trying for two years. Never could get to see him. Within two months it was announced that the St. Jude thing was a go. Just that simple. It was there, it was done and Danny Thomas didn't get any money, but he's got his hospital.

**ZL:** Which they just expanded I hear.

**TC:** Yeah.

**ZL:** Now what about you wanted the President to meet with a group of kids?

**TC:** Yes. That was a tough trip. There were two or three things that happened during that trip, and it only showed to me what kind of a guy John Kennedy was. I thought it'd be a good idea and I talked to Jimmy Minetto about it. I said, "Jimmy, the kids never get a chance to go to a press conference. They don't know what the hell it's all about, but they all are journalists in their school of journalism. Why can't we get some high school kids and invite them and let them have a press conference with the President of the United states." "Great idea". So we went to school and we got it all arranged. Just before it was going to happen, a short time before, I get, from the staff of the White House, "No way, the President will not have it, no kids." They were nasty about it. I begged and pleaded. So I got a hold of Senator Hayden and I said, "Senator I got a problem." He said, "I'll be right there." So he came over and I told him and he picked up phone, I'll never forget it, and he said, "Get me the President." He was on the line within two minutes. "Yes Senator Hayden, what can I do for you?" He said, "Mr. President, my Chairman Tom Chauncey tells me..." He said, "I know Tom, I've talked to him,"--or Mr. Chauncey, he never called me Tom in his life, and he said, "He's doing a great job and I'm looking forward to seeing him," and he said, "He's having a problem. They tell him that you can't appear for that conference he arranged for the school kids." He said, "Tell Mr. Chauncey to tell you when he wants it and where he wants me and I'll be there." Just that easy. Of course the staff went nuts. Another occasion with him, Stuart Udall, Secretary of Interior, called me and he said, "I'd like to have half an hour with the President when he's here." I said, "Don't call me," I said, "You're the Secretary of the Interior and you're in Washington." He said, "No, I can't see him. I can't get an appointment. Do me a favor, it's very important." Bob McCullough, McCullough Chain Saws was trying to build a town called Havasu and they need that land approved and they can't get anything done. The President has to go to the President. So I said, "Well, five minutes and that's it. I'm not going to get in that position but I'll ask him. I just can't tell you how he's going to react." 'Cause you don't go through the staff, they'll just tell you no. I learned that quick. So anyway, he arrived and I said, "I got a couple of things



here," and I told him and he laughed and he said, "Okay." "By the way, Gene Pulliam has been wanting to see you." So I got Gene Pulliam and I had them lined up in chairs. And the President took them all in. Now in two months it was announced that the Government and McCullough had reached an agreement, they're going to build a place called Lake Havasu City.

**ZL:** Accepting that chairmanship. . .

**TC:** I couldn't believe it. I still don't believe it. But he and I became good friends and I have some handwritten letters some place from him. But he was a delightful man. The thing about him that was particularly wonderful is Carl Hayden was getting pretty old, almost ninety I think, and there was an argument about the cars and the parade and we took Senator Hayden from the airport to the Westward Ho and we had a little thing out in front between the post office. And they said, "We can stop here and we'll let Senator Hayden out," and the President said, "Wait." He said, "I'll escort the Senator to his quarters." So when they stopped, he got out of the car, opened the door, escorted the Senator into the elevator, took him up to his room, came back down to the car and the procession went on. That's manners. Wonderful manners. You know what that meant to Senator Hayden to have the President of the United States do that. But it was just natural with him, he didn't think a minute. I took care of that parade. But I'll tell you they had some fun.

**ZL:** Oh what experiences!

**TC:** At the time I thought I was going to die.

**ZL:** But it would also be a little heady.

**TC:** Yes. I don't know why. People are people. They're not that much different. They only have two legs for the pants and it's no different.

**ZL:** Did you ever think of entering politics yourself?

**TC:** Yeah about one minute. Just fast enough to say no. I think it's great if somebody wants to do it, but I don't know how they do it. The abuse they take. Terrible abuse.

**ZL:** Weren't you involved in the Democratic Party?

**TC:** Very. Yes. Absolutely.

**ZL:** Now was that the 1950's?

**TC:** From the time I was old enough to vote.



**ZL:** Is that right?

**TC:** I was a southerner. Arizona was south. The only reason I became a Republican when Ronald Reagan was President so I could vote for him and tell him that I loved both of those people, but I vote for the people. But yes, I was very active. I was Campaign Chairman for Senator Hayden a couple of times. We damn near got beat. I was Campaign Chairman for Mr. McFarland a couple of times. Had a couple of smaller parties. Yeah, it was fun.

**ZL:** One of the things you did that was interesting was to offer--you had a home in Clearwater Hills Estate?

**TC:** I didn't offer, I gave it. It's the stupidest thing I've ever done.

**ZL:** Well let me set the stage here. You had a \$600,000 dollar house.

**TC:** Yeah, it was a little more than that too.

**ZL:** You gave it to the State to use as the Governor's mansion because Arizona has never had a mansion for their Governor and still to this day does not.

**TC:** That's right.

**ZL:** And Raul Castro was Governor.

**TC:** I ran into Raul on the street and I said, "How are you Governor?" He said, "I've got a bunch of people from Mexico here, I have to entertain them." I said, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm going to the Ramada Inn." I said, "You're entertaining the head of Mexico at the Ramada Inn?" He said, "That's the only place we have. We have no place." I said, "Would you like a house?" He said, "Yeah!" I said, "I have a house up at Clearwater Hills. It's real nice. If you want it, I'll give it to the State." And that's what happened. And all hell broke loose. What is Tom Chauncey going to be appointed to by Raul Castro? What does he want with Castro? He's got Castro in his pocket. That's nothing. That's the way it happened.

**ZL:** So then what happened?

**TC:** Well then a very nice fellow with a lovely family who's a twenty-four carrot jerk, Bruce Babbitt's his name, showed up on the scene and he said he wouldn't have his children raised in a house like that. And he wouldn't stay there. Now that should tell you something Bruce Babbitt. I don't think living in a nice house is going to ruin those kids. I couldn't believe it. They're friends, the whole family are friends of mine. They never stayed there a day, so we gave it to the Tom Chauncey Educational Fund, they sold it, they gave it away. I think there's about seven, eight hundred thousand dollars in that fund now and made loans that they have to pay back, scholarships, for people that mainly can't finish but when they can, they have to pay



it back. We used that money for that. Divided amongst the three state universities: ASU, UofA and Northern.

**ZL:** I never knew what happened to that.

**TC:** That's where it is and I won't let them advertise it or publicize it.

**ZL:** So how do students--if they go in and want to know about scholarships, then the school can tell them.

**TC:** The school can get them.

**ZL:** In March of 1971, you attempted to buy twenty-eight acres on the Potomac River near Mr. Vernon. It was originally part of George Washington's estate because some Russians were attempting...

**TC:** The Russians were buying it the next day to have their main place right on the Potomac River. Can you imagine coming into Washington up the Potomac River and seeing the hammer and sickle there.

**ZL:** So what happened?

**TC:** Well I found out who owned it. I called the man and I said, "You don't know me but you can call the Valley National Bank if you will. You can find out that I have the money. I want to buy that house." He said, "Did you ever see it?" I said, "No, but I want to buy it." He said, "Why do you want to buy it?" I said, "I want to keep you from letting the Russians have it. I can't bear the idea of the hammer and sickle, the Communist identification on the Potomac River." He said, "You're serious aren't you?" I said, "Yes sir, I'm dead serious." Well he said, "Mr. Chauncey, I don't know you but I'm not going to sell it to the Russians. It's cancelled." And I said, "So that you're not hurt, I'll pay you what they were going to pay you." He said, "I don't think I want your money, I don't have to sell it." So he cancelled it. The Russians didn't get it.

**ZL:** I never knew what. . .

**TC:** That's what happened. I'd forgotten about that. That was fun. Imagine having that on the Potomac River. A beautiful place.

**ZL:** In 1973 there was discussion here in the Valley about using tax money to build a professional football field. I read that you were opposed to that. And now they're talking about the same thing in terms of a baseball stadium.

**TC:** No, it's not the same.

**ZL:** It's not the same?



**TC:** No. This money is an added tax that limits the time that it will go. It's a lot of money, but it will bring jobs, it will bring distinction. I don't know what it's worth but if you could think of every major city in the United States and small city with a headliner, a tagline "Phoenix, Arizona" what that means in dollars and cents to this state. There's no way that you can buy it. You can't buy a one of those captions.

**ZL:** So you're in favor.

**TC:** You bet. Because it's going to be good for the state. It's going to create jobs, it's going to give the impetus that this place needs. It's painless. The percentage is small. Jerry Colangelo knows what the hell he's doing. He's good at it and he's proven he's good at it and he's just right. Yeah, I'm very much for it. It won't cost money, it will make money.

**ZL:** In December of 1986, you bought a full page advertisement in USA Today to chastise members of the White House Press Corps for their. . .

**TC:** Particularly Sam Donaldson.

**ZL:** For their disrespect to the President who was George Bush. What brought you to the point of.

**TC:** Some nasty article. I can't remember what it was. Lack of respect. They don't respect the President. They respect that office. It's transitory, Reagan, Washington, Lincoln, think of all of them. They work in the White House. The office of the White House is important and that office should be respected just like the Constitution of the United States. Whoever's in there, he's our President and you should treat that with respect. I don't think the press has any right to say Bush. I think it should be Mr. President. It's just wrong and it irritates me to see the press, like little kids with a soap box, they think it's great to call somebody by their first name. And they do that with Bush or Reagan or Roosevelt, whatever. The disrespect for that office should never happen.

**ZL:** What was the reaction?

**TC:** It was wonderful.

**ZL:** Was it?

**TC:** Yes. Besides, it cost me thirty thousand dollars. That wasn't so wonderful.

**ZL:** You were serious about it.

**TC:** I was mad. Yes, I was serious, and it worked. It did a lot of good.

**ZL:** You seemed to have had a particular affinity for South Phoenix.



**TC:** Well, when I was a youngster, comparative, everything's comparative, I knew a lot of people in the south part of town. Met a lot of colored, black people, Mexicans that I've worked with. I remember the black man that fed me and took me out of the hole in the middle of the freight train and I met a priest by the name of Emmett McLaughlin. Father Emmett, a young Franciscan, who went in the town and he came to see me. They had a grocery store down there they wanted to pay with. The Depression had taken them out of business. It was a pretty good size building on a corner down on South Seventh. It's now the Memorial Hospital location. He wanted to buy that building or get it and he wanted me to help him, see if I knew anybody that would help him. We got the building and he took some labor and help, and I went down and helped a lot of people helped and they divided the building in two. They put a theater on one side, we got a projector for our movies and gave a rec hall and they started recreation, free medical clinic, free--all these kinds of things. They just needed help. There was no hospital down south of the river. If the river ran you couldn't get to a hospital. It was an unbelievable situation down there and they just completely ignored South Phoenix. He went down there and he did a lot and he encouraged me and I went down there and we put on barbecues. Some of them were going to run us out of there. Some of them were glad to see us. I think it's the worst thing that ever happened to Phoenix is to be called South Phoenix, it's Phoenix. This isn't North Phoenix, this is Phoenix. South Phoenix? No. It's Phoenix. And they're human and they're real and they're real people. Real hearts, real souls. That's why. No other reason.

**ZL:** How do you see discrimination in the Valley? Do you think blacks and Hispanics are discriminated against?

**TC:** They discriminate each other. That's the biggest problem we've got right now. The blacks and the Spanish, the Spanish speaking people, the Mexican people do not acknowledge the blacks at all. They are strong, strong devoted people to the United states and what it means and when they see the blacks and these other people knocking it, they resent it. The black people see it differently in the way they do it but the Mexican people take it personal. But the Mexicans are devoutly American. They might have problems but they don't have one there. A lot of that problem stems from their own--I think that thing the other day down there was blacks and Mexicans. I don't know that, but it's what I hear. It's different. But they have to learn to get along. Until you raise the standard of living of most of the people, not all the people, you can never do that, but you can certainly help. They've got to have a place to lay down, a place to go to sleep, they have to have a toilet, they have to have a place to study. Until you do that, you're not going to have a good community. That's what we need. It's a disgrace to take people and put them all in one place down there like that. What's his name, these street people, all they're doing is creating more street people. There's no way to help them, they should get those people out of there--separate. I'd like to see small hotels. Inexpensive places where people can pay the rent, but not all in one bunch. You're just creating filth and dirt. Who wants to live near them?

**ZL:** You've received many, many awards and honors, but I'd like to ask you about two of them. You received the Distinguished Service Citation of the Phoenix Chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1967. Do you remember when you got that one?



**TC:** Yeah, but I don't.

**ZL:** Not anything specific?

**TC:** No. I can honestly say that in my lifetime I've never been prejudiced about anybody. I don't look at anybody and think they're Jewish or Catholic or a bicycle riders or white or black or pink or purple. I just never have. I was too poor to think that way and I think coming from being that poor at one time in my life, terribly poor, then to have those people help me like they did, there's no way I can think any other way. I can only assume that because.

[he takes his dog out]

**ZL:** You won the Newton D. Baker II Award. In that, you were cited for your role in Operation LEAP. LEAP was the Leadership and Education for the Advancement of Phoenix.

**TC:** And that's what became the--that huge department of the city, what do they call that?

**ZL:** I don't know.

**TC:** LEAP was the beginning of it.

**ZL:** You started that.

**TC:** Yes.

**ZL:** The inner city needed help. They still do but they needed someone with recognition. At about that time there was a lot of rifts in the streets.

**ZL:** This was in the sixties.

**TC:** Yes. This is when all the trouble was coming up with the rioting in the streets and all this like Watts and Detroit.

**ZL:** And the riots in L.A. and there were some in Phoenix.

**TC:** A little but we stopped it. That helped stop it. Milt Graham had him down there in the middle of that and stopped it, but we didn't have a problem because we had friends, and they know that we were trying to do something to improve this. And that was the purpose of it. So we tried to figure out a way and we went to the City, Herman Chanen and I. I told Herman that I'd put up some money if he would, so I think we gave twenty-five thousand dollars.



**ZL:** And he was a very close personal friend also.

**TC:** Yes. And he said okay fine. So with that, we went down and got the mayor, Milt Graham and we started this Human Resources. They make names that those people can't understand. If they'd just talk about grapes and bicycles, they'd understand it. But they use those ephemeral words. They don't mean anything to those kind of people. There ought to be common sense things. But anyway, that was the beginning and I know that it stopped the riots, but it also gave an awareness that we had to do something about the inner city. The place was terrible.

**ZL:** Didn't you start a lot of classes for the people, and vocational training?

**TC:** Yes, still going on. A lot of them and there's another one down there, a big one. See the Government took over a lot of those. But still there's a lot of them there in Phoenix. I can't remember all of them, but industrial something group. There were a number of programs to help those people, educate them, manual train them to earn and make a living, that sort of thing. That was all started within that, from that group.

**ZL:** How do you see the growth and development of this Valley?

**TC:** Well you're not going to stop it. There's no way you're going to stop the growth in this Valley. It's kind of ridiculous for people to tell me, they don't want any more people but everybody else came from someplace else. It's a great place to live. And as long as it is, as long as you have good Government, we may have had a few glitches but by and large, Arizona-- Phoenix, Tucson, has excellent Government and has for years. Republicans and Democrats alike. They fight like hell, but that's good, that's healthy. But I don't see anything but more growth. What they have to watch is that they don't give it all away and don't create a society that everybody wants someone to do something for them. You only deserve what you earn. That may be simplified but if you earn it, you'll like it a lot better than if somebody gives it to you. Your children, ourselves, what we've worked for and earned for, we remember the most. That's the most precious to us. But if we didn't earn it, if somebody just hands it to us, that's not much. A lot needs to be done in the inner city. In the first place, they need a place for them to sleep. I have slept out in the cold and I damn near froze to death, and I've been without food, and you're not a very happy citizen. That doesn't mean that you have to lay down with them and get just as bad as they are if they're bums, but you can certainly try to help them and you shouldn't be giving them everything. They ought to work for it. Let them clean up the places where they. . . Right now in the heart of Phoenix is a disgrace within a block from the City of Phoenix. I have a building where in the morning we can't get in the office doors without getting the feces out, and the police let them do it. And that's wrong. A clean city, clean people, but growth is going to be here. It's only begun. It's a good place to live.

**ZL:** Bill Shover called you the Godfather of Journalism at ASU. (Mr. Chauncey chuckles) How did he come about that phrase?



**TC:** He just likes me. I helped get it started, the ASU Journalism Department. I stuck my neck out a country mile and had a lot of fights over it. Walter Cronkite--a lot of the people didn't want him to be the head of that--his name.

**ZL:** Because now it's known as the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Telecommunication.

**TC:** One of the best things that ever happened to Arizona State University. It's given us dignity all over the world. Everybody wants to belong to it. Walter has been unbelievable in his time and effort he spent on it. He's walked the streets of New York helping raise money, he's done everything that a man could do, and then some. He did more than I have ever dreamed he could do, and he's still doing it. But of course I'm nuts about him. I've always loved Walter for forty, fifty years. Love his wife, I love his family. They're nice people, but he's a great man and I just thought if we--I think it was Bill's idea. He said, "We need a name." He said, "Do you think there's any chance of getting Walter?" I said, "Hell, I don't know. I'll ask him." That's the way it came about I think.

**ZL:** So you asked him if he would consider being part of this.

**TC:** I asked him to do it. I told him I'd consider it a favor and an honor for the school and for me if he would do it, and he said yes.

**ZL:** Did he think about it or did he. . . ?

**TC:** Not very damn long.

**ZL:** Really?

**TC:** No. He's a friend. It's a blessing. How good it is for those kids. It's a great school.

**ZL:** And you have an Honorary Doctorate from ASU.

**TC:** Yes. I have as much right to be an honorary doctor as you've got of flying a kite to the moon.

**ZL:** Do you consider yourself retired?

**TC:** Hell no. I'm not dead, I'm just busy.

**ZL:** What do you like about this stage of your life?

**TC:** I do as I damn please. And I don't have to go out to dinners if I don't want to and I don't have to go anyplace I don't want to, and I don't. And sometimes I go that I don't want to, but somebody talks me into it, mainly Bill Shover.



**ZL:** What do you think makes the State of Arizona unique?

**TC:** It's a melting pot. It's very simple. The United States is great because it's a melting pot. All those varieties. When you think about it, Arizona's got everybody, every kind. It's a real melting pot and I think that's--our strength is that, it comes from that. Mix that knowledge, those people, all those thoughts and dreams. Makes quite a difference.

**ZL:** You've done so many things to help other people. Is there any one thing that you think made the greatest difference?

**TC:** You don't do things for people, you do it for yourself. An awful lot of it that makes you feel good, doesn't it? And if you can do it, you ought to do it because it does make you feel good. It seems to me that it would be a shame if you didn't. I think you'd miss something. It's awfully gratifying to be able to help people. Somehow they get along otherwise, but it is nice. It always comes back to you in one way or another. I don't think you give a thing away that doesn't come back to you.

**ZL:** If you could send a message to young people of today, what would you tell them?

**TC:** To be honest. Absolutely honest with yourself and with other people. Not only in money matters or things of value, but in your heart and your soul and your conversation. Be charitable. I think the best thing that could be said about a human being is that they never bad-mouthed anybody. I just lost a step-son about a couple of months ago. I considered him my son. I had him from the time he was five until he was forty something. I never once heard him say anything unkind about anybody. He never bad-mouthed anybody. And he had reason with some of them.

**ZL:** You were talking about your step-son that you just lost.

His name was George Rich.

**TC:** He was a fine human being. Died too young.

**ZL:** In his forties, that's a tough loss.

**TC:** It is tough on us.

**ZL:** Tell me about your children.

**TC:** Oh they're great.

**ZL:** You have four children.



**TC:** I don't know, I got a lot of them. I had a mess of kids. All of them that I claim. I have twin daughters.

**ZL:** And they now work on the ranch?

**TC:** They both work here. They're fifty-three. I have a son that's forty something. I forget how old they are. I remember the twins because they were born on New Year's Day at 8:00 o'clock in the morning. He's an attorney at Gus Rosenfeld. And I had a couple of step-children, and one of them I just lost.

**ZL:** Do you have another daughter?

**TC:** Yes. The oldest one, Colleen. All of them have adopted or raised other children and they have children of their own. The twins, Sharon, I don't know how many she's taken and raised, but she has several. So I have great, great grandchildren, and Karyn has taken in several and raised. And I'm very proud of them for that. The kids had their own and then adopted kids.

**ZL:** That is real dedication.

**TC:** Yes. It's paid them great dividends because they give them a lot of love and a lot of joy. That's marvelous for them.

**ZL:** Do you know how many grandchildren you have?

**TC:** Heck no. I got a lot of 'em.

**ZL:** Besides your mother, is there anybody else who was a tremendous influence on your life?

**TC:** There's been so many. I've been so enriched by people of all walks of life. They've been extremely good to me. They've given of themselves and everything else to help me. Tremendous influences. I think each experience bring you something different, so it would be hard to single out. How do you decide whether President Eisenhower, President Nixon--you're fortunate to know them, and know them well, not just hello, not a fleeting thing. Some great friends but I think the most influence you have from people is if you admire what they're doing then you look into how they're doing it and what they're doing, and you either respect them or you don't. They do have an influence but you're influenced by so many things. It isn't just any handful of people. My mother was unbelievable. I would give anything in the world if I had more time and had the influence of money or health to help her when she was living. She was an unbelievable human being. My father was a good man. My brothers, all of them, my sisters, all of them very good to me. All special. Can't single any of them out honestly. But they all had an influence. I think that the most influence is when I worked at Neiman Marcus when I was--just before I came to Arizona, twelve, thirteen years old. I made seven dollars a week. You went to work at seven in the morning and you worked until you were through. And I hitchhiked home.



**ZL:** What were you doing?

**TC:** I wore a little red hat with buttons and a jacket. I looked like Phillip Morris, a runner, a boy, a kid--run errands, you don't do anything important. Seven dollars a week, you didn't have to do very much I guess. I didn't either. I wasn't worth my salt. But I'd hitchhike my way home and a man picked me up and drove me home. A non-descript man, nice man, pleasant. Had maybe an average car, not a fancy car and he visits, it was quite a ways and he said, "Young man," he said, "If you want to be happy and you want to do something with your life, when you get out of this car, you look up to God and you say to God, 'Please help me. I love you I want you to love me,' or something to that effect, and ask him to help you." And he said, "One thing for sure, he will. You don't have to ever doubt that if you give yourself and you do that. He will help you." I think that's the most influence. I was about twelve years old.

**ZL:** And you never saw that man again.

**TC:** Never.

**ZL:** But you've remembered what he told you forever.

**TC:** I sure do and it's meant a lot to me. I firmly believe and I don't care how they worship. If you believe in God and you believe strong enough, he'll take care of you.

**ZL:** You converted to Catholicism as an adult.

**TC:** Yes, sure did. Emmett McLaughlin, he immediately got married. (Laughter) But he was a nice man.

**ZL:** He was a wonderful man.

**TC:** I loved him. He had a great heart and a great conscience. And he did a lot of good. We had a barbecue down there one time, the south part of town. Me and two or three white guys and forty-three black guys to raise money to build the St. Monica's Hospital, the Memorial Hospital now, all that, and we barbecued all day, we cooked our feet, we barbecued them. We stood over the open pit. We couldn't get our shoes on.

**ZL:** Literally?

**TC:** Yeah. Mine was just like footballs. It's a wonder it didn't kill us, stood over that damn thing cooking. There was a black kid come up to Emmett McLaughlin and he always had this rosary. He always looked great with the beads. The kid says, "Father, what does you do when you gets the urge?" Father looks at him and said, "I don't." (Laughter)



**ZL:** Did he leave the Valley?

**TC:** No he died here. He married that gal, who was a nice gal by the way. They worked together twenty hours a day. She's attractive and he was attractive. We made an awful mistake, the Franciscan Church had a really spiritual religious pastor, Father Martin Knoff, marvelous man. He had wind that McLaughlin was

going astray and he was going to transfer him out of down there. Well we were right in the middle of doing so many things; building all those different things, hospital, you name it. Just all kinds of stuff and we went to him and said, "Please don't take him now. Hold up a while and let him finish. Nobody can do what he's been doing," and they couldn't. He was right if he could have gotten him away from that temptation but it's easy to look back. I often wondered if we hadn't. That was very unusual for a strict serious man like Father Martin to listen to the laymen in that area 'cause that's none of our business. But he did. He got sick. He had a tick. But he never faltered from trying to help people. In that area he was good.

**ZL:** So he stayed in the area and still continued with the kind of work he'd been doing.

**TC:** Yes. He was a good man.

**ZL:** He accomplished a lot.

**TC:** Yes he did. Had a free venereal clinic, the first one down there. Took an old building, got all the doctors and had them go down there, they gave the shots and stuff and he had a big gal that looked like a tank and she'd go around and grab these people and make them go get their shots that never had them, any kind of a shot or anything for those people in that area for venereal diseases. We had people line up all around the block, and the doctors went there as long as we needed it. He did a lot of things like that. But he was good. He was sick at the end. He wrote that book and I wish to hell he hadn't been so bitter. I tried to talk him out of it.

**ZL:** The People's Padre?

**TC:** Yeah, The People's Padre and he could have done it without being bitter. I think it would have done more good. It's more in line with what he did. It's understandable. He loved that woman and he was hurt.

**ZL:** It's a tough issue.

**TC:** Yes it's a tough issue. People someday will be sitting around like this talking about their wives and their kids and they'll be priests and married. You know the Eastern Rite, the Far Eastern Rite of the Church, they marry. They have forever. The biggest fights I had after I became a convert, I'd argue with my Catholic friends who were the true blue born or whatever the hell they were, and they'd tell me and I'd say, "Wait a minute, what about the priests that are married?" "Priests never marry." I said, "Oh yes they do." That was my favorite fight because I could always win that one. It was documented.



**ZL:** Can you think of any other areas that you would like to discuss on this tape.

**TC:** And you wanted to discuss all this, you've made me do it. My daughter and then Linda. But I've enjoyed it.

**ZL:** Good, so have I.

**TC:** I remember a lot of things I probably should remember and want to remember, and some I didn't want to remember. so, that's fine. It's been a lovely afternoon.

**ZL:** It's been very fun for me.

**TC:** I've enjoyed it.

**ZL:** And I thank you very much.

**TC:** It's fun. If you want any questions or anything, call me.

**ZL:** I will.

**TC:** I'll be glad to talk to you.

**ZL:** Good.

**TC:** What am I supposed to be doing? Do you know?

**ZL:** I'll tell you when we get off the tape.

