

Oral History Interview
with
Karen Anderson

Interview Conducted by
Tanya Finchum
September 21, 2015

Cowboys in Every County

Oklahoma Oral History Research Program
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Cowboys in Every County

Interview History

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The recording and transcript of this interview were processed at the Oklahoma State University Library in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Project Detail

The purpose of Cowboys in Every County, a subseries of the O-STATE Stories Oral History Project, is to gather and preserve memories revolving around Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC) and Oklahoma State University (OSU).

This project was approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board on October 5, 2006.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recordings and transcripts of the interview with Karen Anderson is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on September 21, 2015.

Cowboys in Every County

About Karen Brewer Anderson...

Daisy “Karen” Brewer Anderson was born in Ada, Oklahoma, on November 11, 1940. Her parents, Veldo and Daisy Brewer, moved with their young daughter to Holdenville, Oklahoma in 1945. Karen attended grades one through twelve in the Holdenville school system, graduating from high school in 1959. At an early age and throughout her youth, the family made multiple trips to support the Oklahoma A&M Aggies and the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Cowboys. Veldo was a 1929 graduate of Oklahoma A&M and Karen would follow in his steps and earn a bachelor’s degree in secondary education from OSU in 1963.

In 1961, prior to graduating from OSU, Karen married her high school sweetheart Bill Anderson. Bill was a 1963 OSU graduate as well, completing a five-year degree in engineering. His work took them away from Holdenville for a brief time but they soon returned. In 1992 the Oklahoma Legislature passed House Bill 1017 which led to Karen returning to college to earn the necessary credits to become Holdenville’s first library media specialist. Karen taught eighth grade English for over twenty years and high school English for several years before she retired in 1995.

In addition to molding young minds as a teacher, Karen serves as a role model and inspiration for those diagnosed with cancer. She has succeeded at winning the battle and shares her story. It should also be noted that throughout all of her medical treatments, Karen did not miss a major OSU sporting event. She is a strong supporter of OSU, has served on committees for the OSU College of Education and in 2010 was inducted into OSU’s College of Education Hall of Fame.

Karen and Bill have two sons. These two sons and their wives are also graduates of Oklahoma State University. In addition, their grandchildren have also graduated with OSU degrees. This four-generation OSU family proudly represents Hughes County in the *Cowboy in Every County* oral history project.

Cowboys in Every County

Karen Anderson

Oral History Interview

Interviewed by Tanya Finchum
September 21, 2015
Holdenville, Oklahoma



Finchum *Today is September 21, 2015. My name is Tanya Finchum. I'm with Oklahoma State University, and today we are in Holdenville, Oklahoma, Hughes County, to interview Karen Anderson. So thank you for having me today.*

Anderson Glad to have you, thrilled to death.

Finchum *Let's begin with having you tell us when and where you were born.*

Anderson I was born in Ada, Oklahoma, 1940, November the eleventh. It was Armistice Day, not Veteran's Day.

Finchum *And do you have brothers and sisters?*

Anderson No. I was kind of a miracle to be here, at the time.

Finchum *So what did your parents do for a living?*

Anderson My dad was the maintenance engineer for the, at that time, Oklahoma Highway Department in Ada. My mother was a stay-at-home mom.

Finchum *Were they from Ada?*

Anderson No. My folks met on a farm in Kay County, Oklahoma. She was from Guthrie and my dad was from Kansas. They met on an aunt and uncle's farm there in Kay County. That's how they met.

Finchum *How did they end up in Ada?*

Anderson Because of the highway department. My dad graduated at [Oklahoma] A&M in 1929 when you could not get a job. He went—I think he first worked for Phillips, pipelining. He even ran for county surveyor for Kay

County. Didn't get the job, but my mother went to Draughon's Business School. She came from a farm family, could not afford to go to college. He worked his way through. She worked for IRS and she saved her money, and when they got married in 1933 she had a car. (Laughs) So that was kind of how they started out.

Then back in that day the highway department...my dad probably stayed in one place for a very short time. They moved around a lot until they got to Ada. We left Ada when I was three years old and he went to Tulsa. Whatever the year was when Roy Turner and Bob Kerr, Robert Kerr, ran for governor. My dad always loved white-faced Hereford cattle. Horned Hereford cattle. Of course so did Roy Turner. That was his thing. Well, Robert Kerr, if you know, he was a big Angus man. He was really well known. Robert S. Kerr won and my dad lost his job. That's the way it was back then.

He had a man who worked for him from Calvin, Oklahoma. They were able to—and he had his best friend coming back, out of World War II. He was in the Seabees. They'd both gone through high school, junior college, Cowley Junior College in Arkansas City, Kansas, and then came to A&M together. He was just coming out of World War, and they had a man in Calvin who was—he had a bulk oil company. He had the money and they started—that was the connection for Calvin, and they started a business where they had bulldozers and did that bulldozer-type work. Then they really bit off a big chew and decided to form the company, Brewer and McMichael Incorporated. The first job they had they weren't even sure they had enough equipment and so on, and so forth, to do it. That was kind of the start of their journey together.

Then that's when we moved to Holdenville. I think it was 1945 so we've been here, Bill's folks and my folks both, [have] been in Holdenville for a long time. Our roots are very deep. Then my dad and his partner, they got into the bridge building business. During the time that they were in business they built quite a few bridges. When I had just had our youngest son—my folks' backyard and my dad's partner's backyard, they were just right together. There was no alley in-between. They had no children and I'm an only child. I was kind of like their niece you know. He came over to see me right after Mike was born, and I'd come home to stay with Mother and Dad, because Bill was working all over the state on—was it the Muskogee Turnpike, Bill? When Mike was born.

Bill

Yes.

Anderson

Okay, and he was like in Muskogee, gone about seven days a week. I mean, he was gone. My dad's partner came over to see the baby and I and our older son, who was five. He went on the job, died of a heart attack on the

job. When that happened then it became Brewer and Anderson. That's when Bill became a partner. Bill is a civil engineer from OSU. The business went from building bridges like on the turnpikes to repairing bridges

Then my dad was—he was an entrepreneur. He found out that they were going to sell the Katy Railroad out in Western Oklahoma, and they were going to sell the ties, the rails, the ballast, and the land, and the minerals. So he gathered up some people to do that. He loved that because he loved the people out in Western Oklahoma. He spent a lot of time out there selling the land back to the landowners. They took—we took the ties and we had to have a place to put them. After they got that all taken care of from Katy Railroad, we started salvaging railroads in Texas, Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska. (Laughs) Bill even went to Minnesota to Alabama. That's how the business went. It was sad because those railroads were gone. Then when my folks died—before my folks died, Bill and my dad went ahead and closed out the business. It wasn't what my dad wanted to do, but anyway, it was time.

They lived in Holdenville. My folks were here too and very involved in OSU, and anybody who wanted to go to OSU they knew to contact the Brewers or the Brewers would contact them because they would take them to OSU. My dad knew a lot of the deans, and he would take them to the dean's office or the assistant dean and say, "I have this young lady, or young man, who'd like to go to school here and is interested in your school." It was just known. He was just known as Mr. OSU. Course my mother was typical of the woman who had everything organized in the background. (Laughs) And he was a president of the Alumni Association back when Murl Rogers and Elizabeth were there. I don't know if you've heard that name or not. I think he was the first executive of the Alumni Association. Then he was inducted into the Engineering Hall of Fame, and got to serve a very short time on the Regents, when Henry Bellmon was governor. Course that was—my dad just thought that was the most wonderful thing.

Finchum *What was his first name?*

Anderson Veldo. His name was Veldo Brewer, which is a very unusual name.

Finchum *Yes, very.*

Anderson Only other person who I know's named Veldo is somebody who was named after him. (Laughs) So people remember that name. Mother—and I got my degree for insurance. Bill and I, neither one, really had a choice where we were going to school. I mean, that's just the way it was. We both came from families that that was where we were going to go to school. He went a year ahead of me. Then when I came to OSU I thought, "Okay, I'll go and get my two-year certificate in the secretarial." Back in the day where you had to

take so many minutes shorthand, all that. I had a counselor who was across the hall and she let me use her bathtub because I hated those bathtubs in the dorm. She said, "You know Karen, I think you might like to change your major to secondary education, English." She knew I read a lot, I did really well in my comp classes, and so I changed my major to secondary education, English major.

When I graduated, Bill and I graduated together in 1963, we'd had our first child in March. In those days you had to go through graduation ceremonies. They did not give you your diploma unless you went through. We had an eight-week old baby boy when we went through. We first went to Okmulgee. Bill was in the Engineering Training Program through the highway department. So he went to a lot of different residencies over the state. We ended up in Okmulgee for a year that he was the assistant resident engineer. I had started teaching here.

I need to backtrack because as I said, that was my insurance, and I was going to be a stay-at-home and had a baby and all that. There was a unique situation at Holdenville at that time. There were two grade schools and the two grade schools had half-time principals. They had to have someone teach the other half day. This was grade school. I had no grade school, no elementary curriculum, nothing, because I took my electives in things that I liked. Nothing that directed me that way, but when the superintendent called and asked me if I would take the job, after they'd had two other teachers quit, this was like about October. Well, I didn't have a washing machine, a dryer, (laughs) I could certainly use the money.

That's what I did that first year, was in elementary, and I had two principals that were the difference in day and night. After that year was over, the seven months were over, the board member who the upper grade school's named after him, he said, "Little lady, you won't ever have to worry about getting a job here because you stayed." It was one of those situations where you—when they say 'baptism by fire', that's exactly what it was.

When Bill received the promotion to go to Okmulgee as assistant resident engineer, then the man who was kind of over all the grade school's curriculum, he knew the superintendent at Okmulgee. He said, "I'll talk to him and see if maybe you can have a part-time, a half-day position." Because I really didn't want to teach full-day. That's what happened. I ended up teaching sophomore English in Okmulgee before desegregation. This was the last year before they had changed that. I really, really, enjoyed it.

Then we had an opportunity to come back to Holdenville. We had a friend, a family friend, and he asked Bill to come with him. That's how we came back to Holdenville. Well, again, the man who was head of the curriculum,

he said, "Would you like to teach half-day in," they called it junior high then. It was just seventh and eighth grade. So I did. I taught half a day until I got pregnant and had to take out, but I was ready to come back. I taught eighth grade English, did the pep club, did the cheerleaders. Friend of mine, she did seventh grade English, and we did the annual. This is back in the day when there was no extra pay. You just did it.

We were very fortunate that they put sixth, seventh, eighth grade in an old grade school and it became the middle school. So we had our own—everything was our own. We were not connected at all to the high school. I still have parents who went through that system that, "Oh, I wished we still had that in Holdenville," because they really thought that was a great combination of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade away from the high school. That rocked along. I taught the eighth grade English for twenty-eight, about twenty-eight years.

In the process the oil bust happened and our superintendent, who was so a financial wizard, he sold that building to—with a gym. It was a big orange gym, he sold that to an oil company. Instead of having to rife a lot of teachers, he moved the teachers who were elementary to the Thomas School, which was the higher, the upper elementary. Those who had secondary, like eighth grade through high school, they moved us to the high school. I taught there four years, I guess that was twenty. Maybe at twenty-two years we were in the middle school. Something like that.

Then I taught four years at the high school where I had eighth grade, and then I also taught sophomores through seniors. So I had kids that I had taught as eighth grade, but they grew up and that was a good thing and I really enjoyed it. The last year I taught at the high school level, right before lunch I had nineteen eighth grade boys, no girls.

Finchum

No girls?

Anderson

And I'm a boy-mother anyway. I could always—they gave me so much hard time about OSU because for boys, OU football is everything. I finally got them to be quiet when I'd say, "Okay, how many national championships does OU have?" Of course they had not a clue. "Okay, OSU has..."—whatever it was at that time. We were second or third in the nation, course most of it was wrestling. (Laughs) They didn't know. That pretty well shut them up. (Laughs)

Anyway, the superintendent came to me and he said, "Would you go back to school," this is when House Bill 1017 passed in '92, "would you go back to school and get your library media and be our first ever library media specialist?" I said, "Sure!" I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of papers I've graded and how many—like the eighth grade boys, like that. I

was ready for change. I really was ready for a change. I knew I didn't want to go to OU, there was no way. Of course it was a very academic school. I don't know where you went, but it's a very academic school. East Central had shut down their library science, because I had received enough library science over there that I ended up doing the library half a day at the middle school for several years. OSU didn't—also closed its. The next thing was UCO (University of Central Oklahoma). I went to UCO.

I took that terrible GRE test and I came out of there saying, "I'm not stupid. I know I am not stupid." (Laughs) At that time you didn't have to make—you just had to take the test. I had a wonderful, wonderful, professor. If a professor can make research and what else was it? There was something else, another class—I mean another class that was grouped together, he could make it interesting. He was a type of person...he was also still in the trenches because he worked in the research department of UCO Library on the weekends, to keep his foot in the door so to speak. He thought it was marvelous I was driving all this way from Holdenville to take the classes. He was really an inspiration, but he had cancer and died before I finished. I didn't finish because in the process my folks died. I had a lot of stuff to do with that and Bill says, "Why don't you retire Karen?" After thirty-one years I thought, "You know, I think so. I think I'm ready to retire."

We had two grandchildren by that time and—or three. Two or three, I'm trying to think, in '95. We love OSU sports. I mean we love to go to ballgames, we just do. It's just really our thing. Everybody knows if Karen and Bill aren't in town they're somewhere with OSU, probably with one of the sports teams. Then when I retired—first right out of the box, a friend of mine, who had also been a teacher, and her sons said, "Karen, you need to be the historian of our church." We're Methodist. We were getting ready for our centennial. I'm like, "I don't think so. I don't think I want to do that." "Oh yes Karen, you have a year, you can prepare..." and all this.

Well, duh, it was like the big picture because I did extensive research in the newspaper files at Stillwater—excuse me, at the historical society, and found out that our church is so iconic. It is such a symbol, historical and so forth. It just became a real passion. The year of the centennial every Sunday we had a centennial moment and we put that in a book. They were not in consecutive order, but something happened in the church. We had some of the finest ministers in the Methodist congregation, you know, the Methodist Conference, come through our church. In the process they had built this church in 1925. They finished in 1925. I would like to show it to you because it's just beautiful.

A family by the name McFarland had ties to Holdenville. They were ranchers and oil people. In 1929 they forgave the rest of the mortgage and they had a big celebration where that happened. Course that was right at the

time of the big October, whatever it was. I think it was that weekend right at the crash. Our church has rocked along and was built in 1925 as a showplace. We have the most gorgeous rose window and other stained glass windows, beautiful oak, it's just a beautiful church, but infrastructure was a real, real problem. We didn't know what to do. In a church setting, do you do something with this building or do you go out and build another building? You don't know what to do. It can split the church, and there were people who left the church, but it had to be on God's time.

When it was the right time—we have a lady in our church who is part of the Coates Roofing, which is out of Seminole, so she knows construction. She knows construction people. She knew the man out of Sulfur, Oklahoma. That's what they do, they're construction managers. The man that he sent to Holdenville to do the construction loved the history of the church. If he found something—we found a dumbwaiter that had been closed off for a long time. He might find a book, papers, whatever, and he was so excited, but he was in charge of the renovation of our church.

We completely gutted the kitchen, which had been used for fifty years, when my mother and Bill's grandmother cooked for Rotary. It had not been upgraded for a long, long time. One of the men on the building committee works for Sonic. So we got a really nice commercial kitchen. Then we added on a portico and a pastor study, office, nursery, and another Sunday school class, and a five or four level elevator. I mean, nobody else has an elevator in Holdenville like this. (Laughs) It is just beautiful, and the brick matches so well. They did such a good job. You don't really realize that it's been added on to because it just looks so much like it did, and beautiful landscaping.

The church is a big part of our life. I've been the UMW president. We do a big luncheon in May. It is the town event of the spring. We normally, probably, between close to 400 people we serve from eleven to about one. It takes everybody on board, of course, to do it, but it's a lot of fun too. We didn't have it one year because the kitchen was being redone. It was like, "When are you going to have the luncheon, when are you going to have the luncheon?" This town just knows when—that's the big deal.

I've just carried on being the historian and finding out more and more. A lot of it's in my closet, some of it's in the safe out at the office, because we have some really—the original membership books. I dug those out. We've had a young secretary who had not a clue about the history of the church you know. She stuck them in some closet, well I found—you know, just things like that that just means a lot to me. Then in the process after the big centennial year, then I thought, "Okay, I need to work on my own genealogy." (Laughs) And that you never finish. I have been able to do a lot.

My dad would be so proud of me because he really did some things back in the day. My mother was the organizer, so there's names on the back of pictures, who they were. That really help me in the journey of the genealogy. I don't know if I'll have either one of the sons be interested in it, or whether I'll have grandkids, but anyway—and it's on paper. I didn't put it on a computer, it's on paper. I'm still just old school that way, I just am. Now our children, our oldest son, Bill, if you live in Stillwater you've probably heard of the Railroad Yard that's south of Stillwater on 177. That's our son's business.

Finchum

Okay.

Anderson

It started as a receptacle for all these thousands of ties. At the time, when the land was bought, the man who is retire—he had been a vo-ag teacher here. Then he worked for the state department. Francis Tuttle, you've heard that name, he was superintendent here. We were all very close. They were Methodists, the whole family. Bill's dad then worked for Vo Tech. That's what he was doing in Stillwater.

When they first started the business then the man, his name was Hugh Lacey, he hired some of the guys, mostly from Holdenville, to help him, to work in the business. Then when he was ready to retire we had young men, from Holdenville, who more or less managed it. Then our son went up there and he started managing it when he was still in school. He was one of those late bloomers because he quit and then went back to school. He got his degree in ag-econ, which is a great degree. You can do a lot with it. He's also an entrepreneur so he's added steel, and now they have the manufacturing there in the back. They had to bring in this—they had to build a building around it. They brought this big crimper from British Columbia in on the train. We got to see all that when it came in, so they do that kind of work.

They still do a lot of pipe, and he found that you can take those old tank cars and you can take the ends out and they use them a lot in the, the county does, for bridges or for culverts. They just do a lot. Then in the last three or four years he started another company called RRY services. He has someone who knows how to build bridges, which is just kind of like coming around from back to the way I grew up and Bill's business in building bridges. He has someone who actually does the building of the bridges, but that's another thing that he's involved in.

Plus he has a lot of land and a lot of cattle. They live out on their farm, their ranch, south of Perkins. They have two children. McKinzie's just like his dad, sort of a late bloomer. He's just now getting into college and he's in the Gateway Program at OSU. Dana graduated from the School of Agriculture and Horticulture. She'd never even had chemistry, came from Sasakwa,

Oklahoma. She worked so hard, and she got that degree, and she was in the—we [didn't] have Phi Beta Kappa [at that time], but we [had] something else. Phi-something, if you're in the top ten percent of your graduating class, and that little girl made it. Then they have a younger daughter who is getting ready to be sixteen, and she's been homeschooled and now she's decided she wants to go to public schools. She's in the Perkins High School and really likes it.

The younger son and his wife...Mike always was a coach. I mean he loved ball, he played all ball. He even played on a Legion team, so you know, it's what he wanted to do, was be a coach. He also graduated from OSU in that top ten percent in the School of Education. At that time you took a lot of high, of the higher sciences, because he had anatomy, and physics, and chemistry, and all those. When he started coaching then he did teach the higher sciences. He taught and Debbie, his wife, she's a first generation college graduate. So was the other daughter-in-law and my mother and daddy loved them to pieces, because they're just really great girls.

The other daughter-in-law, she doesn't have the national certification, but she's a master teacher. She and Mike taught at Perry. Then he left coaching and teaching for about seven years. When he came back is when we were riffing again, we were going through a budget crunch. It was like, "Mike, you think you can get a job?" Well, he did. He got a really good job at Tonkawa, and so did Debbie. That's when he started teaching physics, and chemistry, and physical science, and then coaching. He was lucky enough to be coaching on two teams that were state champions, which is a big deal when you're a coach. And they have two daughters.

Their oldest daughter, Kaitlyn, did really well in school. It's so neat when you live in a town where you've got a junior college because you can take those classes concurrent and they give you an opportunity to do that. Both their daughters were able to get quite a few hours that way. Then she went to OSU, and she's in the College of Education and just graduated this spring and has her first job in Perry. I mean, going back to where Mike and Debbie first started teaching, so they still know people, which is good for her. She's teaching third grade. She's finding out she said—she told her folks, "I like to be the teacher or the person that goes in and fixes everybody's room, gets it ready for school. All this grading and studying and everything, it is work." (Laughs)

Her younger sister, who went to NOC (Northern Oklahoma College) her freshman year, and her boyfriend, he was a Presidential Leadership Scholarship, so he could get his associate's there without paying any money. So he stayed there and got his associate's. She came her sophomore year, in the College of Education, and she wants to be a counselor, elementary counselor. I thought you had to have your master's, and I'm not sure if you

have to teach before you get your master's or not. Anyway, but you have to have a teaching field. She started off in business, when she found out you had economics she's like, "I don't think I want to do that." Then she went to English, because she's a pretty good writer. Then she said, "I don't think I want to teach high school kids English. Then she went to—social studies I guess it was that she found out she'd have to do economics. She finally went to P.E., well she is a dancer. She is an athlete. So it's really right down her alley and she's much happier this year.

They got married in June, so we have a grandson-in-law, I guess you'd say. I knew he was a keeper when, they dated practically all through high school, when he sat down and talked to me. Not be one of those guys that would go, "Oh, can I? Yeah, I got to go," all this. He liked to sit down and talk to Shelby's grandmother. He's also an athlete and very smart. He thought he wanted to go into—he wants to go into secondary education, teaching math, secondary math. He is very good in math, but if you go through that route at OSU in secondary education majoring in math, you have to take a class called Linear Algebra before you can take anything else. That would have meant that he'd have to take another semester of school and not get out at the same time that she would. He went to the P.E. and has enough hours in math that he can take the test, which is what our son did.

Our younger son and his wife, just moved to Newcastle. They've sold a house, bought a house, graduated a daughter, married a daughter, and then started, both of them, two new jobs. It's been quite a year for them. It's still really, really busy. You know different schools do different things. They went from a 2A school to a 4A school, so it was quite a jump.

Another thing that I probably would talk about is that getting involved in genealogy, I'm a member of the Oklahoma Genealogical Society and I love to go to their monthly meetings. They have really good speakers. One of the speakers was a man named Bill Welge. He was, at that time, he was Director of Research and something else. He had two titles, and he came and did a talk. He talked about wanting to get the different counties microfilmed. This was before the centennial.

Finchum

Newspapers and...

Anderson

No, county courthouse—the county records, because they can do the—they already have a lot of the newspapers microfilmed and now digitized. He talked about he wanted to get as many counties as possible to be microfilmed before the centennial. He knew they couldn't get all of them. He mentioned Hughes County. I was like, "Oh." He said, "Well, we tried to do Hughes County and we had a problem and it didn't work out." That was just like the big red flag to Karen, so I found out how to reach him and called him right away, said, "What happened? I know these records are

really important to get them microfilmed.” Even though the digitizing is good they know the microfilm will last for—at least a hundred years. It’s the long-term, to get it done. Of course the people from the Mormon Church are the ones who do that. They do it all over the United States.

He came down and he told me then, “Karen, don’t ever let anybody tell you that Hughes County is a small county because,” we’re right in the middle of Creek and Seminole tribes. He said, “There is a lot of records here that sure need to be saved.” Where they were kept, in the basement of the courthouse, they were not environmentally protected at all. The jail is down there. I swear those guys probably ate the lightbulbs sometimes, you know. (Laughs) If they got rid of something they just dumped it down in the basement. It was a mess, it was a huge mess.

I had one of the ladies who is a good friend of mine, we go to church together, she was the court clerk and she says, “Karen be careful of any rats down there when you go down there.” It’s like, “Oh my gosh!” We started that and we would bring the records upstairs of course. I would not go down there until the lady custodian, she was so nice to me, and she would tell me, “Okay, today is not a good day. I don’t want you to go down there.” I would never go down there by myself. We had people, ladies, who came and went and we worked on it. We had to bring it home. There was no way we could do it all at the courthouse. So in the process I had major foot surgery, and I was off my one leg for about eight weeks. I had these two older ladies that finished the job up for me, and it took three years to get it done, three years.

The lady who came from the Mormon Church, she and her husband started it. Then she was the only one microfilming in the state at the time, she and her husband. He got ill and had lung cancer and passed away. They would pull her here, and pull her there, and that was another reason it took so long. The county accessor, again, another really good friend, let us use her little map room and we had those containers, those boxes that were up to the ceiling, that were ready to be microfilmed when the lady could come and microfilm. Then trying to get them put back in where they’re supposed to be in this courthouse. That was something. I knew it was going to be a big project, but still, it was so important to get that done. Of course it was quite an education to do it, but it was...I couldn’t have finished it without those two ladies that more or less came in and finished it at the end.

As I said, we go to all sports, so football, men’s and women’s basketball, baseball, we have wrestling tickets, and we give those to our retired Methodist minister who lives in Stillwater, who’s from Morrison, and loves wrestling.

Finchum

When you were students, did you get to go to the games? Various games and things?

Anderson

We were there when Iba was there, and we went to some basketball games. The place where we lived is right catty-corner of where the tennis courts used to be, where you have the little jog right there. It's a two-story and there were four apartments in it. We got there, it was like fifty dollars a month. Because Bill was in the School of Engineering, he was real close to his classes. We both had a year and a half left of school when we got married. It was pretty primitive, but it was fine for us. The worst thing that ever happened when I—I was pregnant. My mother was really unhappy because I got pregnant before I did my practice teaching. In that day I had friends in elementary education who'd sign a contract that would not go out practicing teaching pregnant. Yes, it was a big deal. My mother was like, "You worked so hard to get this far!"

My mother-in-law had had a baby. She had a late-in-life baby. She was thirty-nine when she had her youngest child. She had maternity clothes that she wore to work. I wore those—they were like long vests. The lady who was my supervising teacher, she knew. Her name was Gladys Ingram, and she was of the old school. She never married. Her students, her school, was her life. I mean, she was that type and she was really sweet to me. The man at the college, who was supervising out of the College of Education, had not a clue I was pregnant. I was very lucky that I didn't show very much. The kids knew it because one of the girl's mothers was a—she was a faculty advisor for my sorority and she knew. I'm sure she passed the word around.

He wanted me to go to Sand Springs and interview for a position in high school English second semester. I said, "My husband's going into the School of—he's in the School of Civil Engineering. He's going to go through the engineering training program. We're going to go to Oklahoma City." (Laughs) Phew! I got through that, because it was really a big deal that you could not go out pregnant. I didn't mean to be, but things happen.

Finchum

Things happen.

Anderson

Again, that was insurance. We went to—I think it was mostly basketball and a few ballgames, but when I was a kid we would come to the OU-OSU football game. It might've been the A&M game. It always was played when it was so cold. Like probably at Thanksgiving. My mother and I would get so cold we would go to the Library and go into the restroom where the big radiator, steam radiator, was and warm up. Course they would beat us badly. Driving up with my dad and mother, my dad would look at—coming from Holdenville you're going to go by the Experimental Station where they have the crops and all. In the background you can see some orchards. My dad would say, "See that orchard back there, I helped stake that for fifty cents a day," or whatever. I mean, he was one of those that told you things like that,

so that was one of the reasons why there was only one place for me to go. I didn't even think about going any place else.

Finchum *He graduated from there in '29...*

Anderson In '29.

Finchum *Did he have an opinion when they switched the name from A&M to OSU?*

Anderson You know, I was—let's see, that was '57. Bill, he went to—see he graduated [high school] in '58. So they had just changed—he went to summer school right after high school. He went up there and worked and went to summer school right after his senior year. So it had just changed, I was thinking. I don't remember my dad ever say anything.

Finchum *From Aggies to Cowboys?*

Anderson No. Just this last weekend at the College of Education tailgate we had some Oklahoma Aggie t-shirts and they were popular, very popular, so that was good. He was very proud of his education and was very proud of being able to help kids. That was really his thing. We used to have, the counties would have, the alumni put it on, and the county alumni people helped. They would do a nice dinner for the kids in the top ten percent of the senior class. They would do them as juniors, and it was a recruitment for them to come to OSU. That was when—what was his name? He had entertainers. He had college students who would go around with him...

Finchum *Alexander.*

Anderson Yes! Right, that's who it was. They would come and they would entertain, and they would also have a student who would come with them who would talk to the kids and that was very popular. We did that, gosh, we did that a number of years. It finally just kind of faded out. Got to be where they liked the kids to come up as juniors. We actually did a junior sneak. We took kids up, two carloads, two or three carloads, of kids up to OSU as a college junior sneak. We went into the building that has the School of Journalism, where you have a rotunda...what am I trying to say? You have a stage and then it's in the round. We had different people come from the different schools and the kids would—they would move, and the kids would be able to talk to them. Several of those kids went to OSU and did really well. It paid off.

Now, the alumni—and I was also on the board, Alumni Board. When I was asked to join the Alumni Board Jerry Gill said, "Karen, you probably were dragged to more OSU alumni stuff than any kid I know. Would you like to be on the board?" I came on at a perfect time, because up until then there

hadn't been a lot of money, hadn't really been a lot of money. It was a struggle. A lady by the name of [Dr.] Kathy Laster came on as president. There was a company who wanted to buy the OSU alumni database. Now this the emails—email addresses. It was a bank. I believe it was a bank. They were going to pay the alumni ten million dollars. Dr. Halligan was the president at the time. She had worked for Southwestern Bell. I mean—well, it was Southwestern Bell, probably, then. I'm not sure if it was already AT&T. This had been—well yeah, it would be AT&T. It would be, I'm trying to think, '90s, soon after I retired, that I did this. Late '90s anyway. I'll never forget Dr. Halligan coming to the board meeting and saying, "This young lady is a negotiator, because she got *all* the money to go for the Alumni Board."

That was also just at the time that emails were starting to become—everybody having an email. At that time the alumni gave the seniors, the graduates, one year free membership. We were housed in the Union and were downstairs on the second floor for a while. Then they also had offices, where we met was up on the fourth floor.

They wanted to do an alumni center. That was a huge dream. They had a big deal the first Saturday of the football [season], and Jerry Gill came and talked, because it was kind of his dream. He said, "When you write out your strategies," and he said, "That was always on my list, an alumni center." That money was kind of, helped kind of get things started, you might say. Then, "How can we raise the money? Where can it be put?" All that. That spot is where Henderson, which is—what was it called? That was where the College of Education was, on that corner. I'm trying to think. It was Henderson I guess. Henderson Hall? What was it called? That's where I went, when it was the College of Education, so that building had been taken down. I'm trying to think—anyway, that's—of course we're looking at the Union right across the street, perfect.

There weren't any women on the committee as far—I mean, the whole board was involved, but then there was a committee, a building committee. The executive of the committee flew to Texas and they had just opened their alumni center real close to the football field. They videoed of course. In it they had this gorgeous fireplace right in the middle and it was very elegant, but very homey. Then they went to Kansas State and it was pretty new. It was beautiful, white limestone. I don't remember seeing the inside. I'm sure we did have some video inside, because when they came back, flew back, they showed it to us. Then Kansas, KU, was behind a fence, kind of like a nondescript red brick building is what I remember. I don't remember Missouri. I don't remember about some of the others, but I do remember Kansas State, Kansas, and Texas.

When they went to Texas, when the guys went to Texas, they had this lady. She said, “Oh come, I want to show you the women’s restroom.” They’re like, “Okay?” “I want to show you how many stalls we have in the women’s restroom.” They realized they did not have any women on this committee, the building committee. When they came back they asked a lady, her name is Cindy, starts with a ‘Z’ and she’s from around the Lawton area. Her husband is a lawyer, and she does a lot of dog rescue. They asked the two of us to be on the committee. So we were kind of there in name, I guess you’d say.

Another thing that was really interesting: when you have that kind of job, when you want to build something on a campus, the Regents have to approve it. It has to be that Modified Georgian. There’s some buildings that got by that, that are not Modified Georgian. When they put the specs out they just put it out. I don’t know how many architect firms they sent it to, but a whole bunch. I don’t know what all the feedback was, but I do know that one of the architects they sent it to, his name was Larry. I don’t know what his last name is at this point. He was known all the way around the world. He was a world-renowned architect, but he taught in the School of Architecture at UT, University of Texas.

He was interested and they’re like, “Larry [Shell], whatever his name is, is interested in building our building, designing our building?” The comment, I guess, that I was told was that he said, “Well you know anybody can build a standalone building, but to make it conform to the campus is what is really important.” I think, I’m not sure if I’m right, but for some reason I think his design went back to the Regents maybe three times before they okayed it. They had certain parameters they wanted and that’s what it had to be. Of course I think it’s beautiful.

Finchum

I love the fireplace.

Anderson

Well, they didn’t have the money, really, to do that. Being on the committee, Clayton Taylor was the president. I’ll never forget when he called me, and it was a conference call, and he said, “Karen,” he said, “Conoco Phillips has offered to finish it, finish the building...” Something like nine million dollars, a big amount. “...if we give the naming privileges. If we name it the Conoco Phillips Alumni Association Building.” I said, “Go for it. That sounds wonderful.” The man who was—he was CFO of Conoco Phillips, his name is [Gene] Batchelder. His son [Chris Batchelder] is the one who’s executive of the Alumni Association right now. I don’t know whether you’ve met Chris or not. Chris was involved in the fundraising too, but his dad, Gene, I got to sit right next to him. He’s this really, really, nice-looking guy and so nice.

That family, the Batchelder family, gave the money to put the fireplace in there. Course they wanted it built—I well remember this, they wanted it built so the students, and everybody, could go through. They wanted the students, they wanted them to come into the Alumni Building too. That's why the doors are situated like they are, so—campus, it's very accessible on campus. Then when Larry Shell retired then there was money raised to do the garden, all the landscaping there to the side, on that outside patio, which they added that to it. It just keeps growing.

Another thing—have you ever heard of Grandparent University?

Finchum

Yes.

Anderson

Well, I was lucky to be on the board when that happened. The first Grandparent University, they might have—somebody told me they had eight subjects. There were less than a hundred people who went, because it was all brand new. It came from Wisconsin. The lady who was in charge of the Student Alumni Board, when they go to...at this point they went to Wisconsin where they win the wonderful big trophy or whatever they do for Homecoming. They've done so well with that. They evidently had Grandparent University at University of Wisconsin, and so like, "Okay, we think that'd be cool at OSU!"

So she was the lady that kind of helped get that started with the student board. We were able to go to all of them with our grandchildren, until they aged out, except for two. There were two that we missed when I couldn't go. You might want to take that off camera when I'm going to tell you what's happened to me. I don't know whether or not you want to do that or not...

Finchum

It's up to you, if you want it. I think it's interesting, but it's whatever you want.

Anderson

Anyway, so we got to do that. Now that they've got the legacy deal that really gets the kids involved as young, young. Instead of going out in high school and bringing the kids in. So it's another way to recruit kids.

Finchum

Grandparent U's been going on how long? I don't really know when it started. [2003]

Anderson

Okay, our youngest grandchild, we aged out with her when she was thirteen. At the time it first started you had to be eight. Now they've gone from seven to thirteen, I think. Seven to thirteen. The granddaughter who just got married, she was sweating it that she could go with her sister, because her birthday's in February, to turn eight. There's just twenty-three months difference, twenty-one months difference in the two girls. Of course they wanted to go together. They let us bring two girls since there were two

alumni, two grandparents. That was the most wonderful experience. Anybody who's done it, and hasn't done it but wants to...it's grown so much, that they have the two sessions.

They've had the two sessions for I don't know how many years. They've gone up to—is it something like about thirty subjects? Thirty majors? They don't have the same ones each time, but I think it's grown that much. It got to be the point they had to do it with a lottery, because they had it where you phoned in at eight o'clock on a certain day, and if you didn't get your name in the pot by the time they met the quota, it was over. I think the last year that they did it that way they had a hundred people who didn't get in. So it's like, "Okay, we've got to change this." The lady who's in charge of it, Melisa—what was her last name? [Parkerson, maybe.] She is a pistol, she is so good. She's really the one who's taking it and really rolled forward with it. She's done a great job.

I think one of the funniest things that ever happened about Grandparent University, Bill and I were traveling with a man out of Tulsa. We'd gone to Washington. One of the older ladies with us, her family are bankers. They own banks; one in Watonga, they own in Okmulgee, they own in Tulsa. Their last name is Mabry, M-A-B-R-Y. We were sitting, eating our last lunch together, and something came up. Somehow I got started on Grandparent University, how cool it was and is such a great thing. This older lady, Mrs. Mabry, turned around to me and says, "Well, I just must tell David about that,"...Boren. (Laughs) It's like, "See! We have something you [University of Oklahoma] don't have and it's so good," but she was just like, "I just need to tell David about that." (Laughs) I still think that's pretty funny, you know.

Yeah, I have a lot of history with OSU. Over there on that wall is when I was inducted into the College of Education Hall of Fame in 2010. I didn't write any books, I wasn't a professor, but I think that probably what the deal was of teaching as long as I had in one spot and also being the first elementary librarian. I think that...

Finchum *Impacted a lot of lives in those roles, yes, I would think.*

Anderson And the lady who inducted me, she's head of all the IT at the College of Education. She's from Perkins. You don't know who that would be. Can't think of her name right now. Anyway...

Finchum *Let's back up just a minute. Which dorm did you live in when you first went there?*

Anderson Okay, my freshman year I lived in Stout. It was the furthest away from Morrill Hall. (Laughs) It was a very rainy, rainy, fall that year. I got my

application in. We sent it in so early that I was on the first floor, which is unheard of for a freshman. All my friends were on the fourth floor, but then I lived in the house, the old Pi Phi house, which is now the Lambda Chi house, my sophomore year. There were ten of us that got to live in what we called 'The Attic'. There were like bunkbeds. The bathroom had the claw feet on the bathtub you know. It was just so cool. There was just something about that house, had a lot of personality, a lot of character. Then I got married, see, my sophomore year, because I was going through school in three and a half years, with summer schools.

Bill was going through in four and a half years. In the College of Civil Engineering you have to go, at that time, you had to go to a surveying camp and it was out close to Buena Vista, Colorado. It had been established for quite a while. Instructors would go out in the summer, and I think they were all guys. Bill, was on the crew, was on the work crew, so he went out with the instructors. That was the summer we got married and I was in summer school over at East Central. Just so happened my dad was on that committee. So he took my mother and Bill's mother and I, during my Fourth of July break, and that was the only time I saw him all summer, until we got married. We just celebrated our fifty-fourth anniversary.

Finchum *Long time.*

Anderson *Yeah.*

Finchum *How did you meet him?*

Anderson *Church.*

Finchum *Here? So you were high school...*

Anderson No, we knew each other when we were young. We went to Sunday school—our folks were in the same Sunday school class, so that was how we met. We went together most of the time in high school. Our anniversary actually is Halloween, because that's when we started going steady. Then we married in 1961, after my sophomore year, and he had finished his junior year, because he was a year ahead of me, with the summer school. Then he graduated, we both graduated mid-term and our son was born in March. He came early. I didn't make it all the way back to Holdenville to my family doctor. That was also interesting. (Laughs) Bill's so good with directions. He got lost that day taking me to the hospital, because being the first...you know, I wasn't sure and I was a month early. I was coming home to have—my hometown doctor was going to deliver my baby. So I walk in, they don't know me, but the lady who was the receptionist was from Holdenville...

Finchum *Small world.*

Anderson ...small world. I was going to a doctor at that clinic. It was the Mayflower Medical Clinic that was right off of May Avenue (Oklahoma City). The doctor I was going to go to was in Holdenville for a funeral. A doctor who didn't know me from anything was the one who delivered our first baby. He was so nice and so gentle. I didn't even know my blood type. (Laughs) Then when I had my younger son, then that family doctor was no longer delivering babies, but he said, "I owe you one." I worked at the clinic hospital. It was altogether at one time, the physician-surgeon clinic and hospital were all in one big, huge building. Between my freshman and sophomore years in school I worked in the office, and I did everybody's vacations. I worked switchboard, and that was interesting to do. Anything in the medical is kind of like school, it's not ever the same. It's always different, I really enjoyed it. Anyway, that was something else I did.

Finchum *How often would you come home from OSU when you were there?*

Anderson Well...

Finchum *Every weekend?*

Anderson Well, when you're a pledge you have certain things you do. In the old days we were not initiated until second semester, because you had to make your grades. They've completely changed that nowadays, which I don't like, but anyway, that's what they do. I got really homesick. Oh my goodness, I got really homesick my freshman year. My dad being in construction, he was traveling a lot. He would sure make a point that he'd come by to see me. You had to go downstairs to the pay phones, they were in like a booth, to telephone. That's the only way, in those days. This is like late '50s, early '60s. My mother kept these letters that I wrote home, being so homesick. (Laughs) Yeah, I was really homesick.

Finchum *You still have them?*

Anderson Oh yeah. My mother kept all the letters that she and my dad—that they had in their courting, because they dated a long time before my dad got a job so they could get married. That's just the way you did it, back then. So yeah, she saved all those letters, so that's been really a treasure to pass down to my kids.

Finchum *Now how do you keep, with texts now?*

Anderson I don't.

Finchum *It's not the same.*

- Anderson** I don't text. I've tried a little bit and it took me longer to text than it would to pick up the telephone to call. I'm a person I like to talk to somebody. I like somebody on the other end of the line. I know, especially grandkids, they do all this texting, but they know that Nanny is going to call. They just know that. Now Bill has a friend, a young man, he's a freshman at OSU right now, who is his texting buddy. That's the only one he ever texts to.
- We were very fortunate that our kids, grandkids, have been in Oklahoma. Both the girls were real involved. They were cheerleaders, and athletics, and other things. Then McKinzie, our grandson, is an Eagle Scout, so he and his dad have been real involved in all—they went to all those adventure scouting places as he was coming along. Then Mikaela, has been a—she was a competitive dancer for quite a while, so we got to go see her dance. We were very fortunate. Some grandparents don't get to see their kids, grandkids, very often because they grow up so fast. Two of them are twenty-two, one's going to be twenty-one in February, and the other one's going to be sixteen in just a few days.
- Finchum** *So in my head, there's four generations that have been to OSU? Your dad, you...*
- Anderson** Yes, there'll be four generations. Bill's folks and my dad, Bill and I, our two sons and daughter-in-law's, then our grandchildren. So that's four generations. I don't think any of them ever even thought about anywhere else.
- Finchum** *Especially the other school down south?*
- Anderson** Well we used to go, a long time—we used to go to the OU-OSU football game down there. We have stood in the dirt for the first quarter to be over before we could even get up the ramp. Back in the day when we were pretty young, the guys liked to wear orange cowboy hats. I mean they were regular cowboy hats. Someone, as Bill was standing in line on the ramp, somebody took it off. Never saw it again. Then we've had this—back when our younger son was where he wanted to go to the football games—again, he's coached a lot. He still—if you sit by him at a ballgame, he sees the field. He was always the coach that was up in the crow's nest or upstairs, because he's just one of those. He can see it. I think he thinks his mother's kind of a dummy, but anyway. (Laughs)
- Finchum** *We're talking football?*
- Anderson** Yeah, mostly football. But anyway, I didn't go that ballgame. Bill and Mike went to it. At that time they had bleachers that were really high up, at Norman. They sat on the very top part of the bleachers and they were swaying in the wind. The last time we went to a football game at Norman

we sat pretty low, and I think somebody had maybe given Bill some tickets, a contractor or somebody they knew. We had to walk through the OU students...that was *awful*. Bill said, "That's it."

We have friends here at our church who went to OU. I have no problem with people—that's where they should, but in this part of the state you go to Wal-Mart and buy your OU t-shirt and you're a fan. That's just the way it is. We beat them at Norman, I don't know how many years ago it was that this happened that our friend, who is an OU graduate and is a real close friend, he brought his ticket to church, came down the aisles. "Well, here's the ticket Bill and Karen, and you weren't there to see it." We're like, "We don't come to Norman. It's not in our vocabulary." We do not go to Norman. (Laughs) Everybody just knows that. "Oh, [you] didn't go?" "No. We didn't go." That's just the way it is.

Finchum *I don't think you're alone in that either. (Laughter)*

Anderson Course the OU fans have gotten so mad because they had to buy season tickets if they wanted to come to the OSU-OU football game. Oh, poor babies. (Laughs) This last game when they played at Tennessee, we've been to Tennessee. We know what that's like with the crowd. At the time we went I had just retired. We went to Tennessee one weekend, came home—flew to Tennessee, came home. Then drove to Aspen and stayed a few days in Aspen and went to Wyoming to the Wyoming game. We did that all in about ten days.

I told the people, the OU people that are friends of ours, "Well, if you go to the ballgame at Tennessee, their stadium is huge and it's beautiful," da-da-da-da-da-da-da, "but you look at the campus buildings. You'll see where the money went." OU and OSU both have done a good job of really—you know, their campuses are really pretty. I kind of put that in there. Some of my best friends, and some of best friends are either doctors, lawyers, whatever, and they're OU graduates. That's fine.

Finchum *OSU doesn't offer law...*

Anderson But you know if they go through ag-econ, that is a gateway. A lot of them go to law school or into the Federal Land Bank. That's an area that I know that's such a good, I guess, a general degree.

Finchum *It makes sense, sure.*

Anderson Another thing about me is my mother was—she had two green thumbs. Here she was quite elderly and had a stroke, and she had her little walker, and her little chair, and she was out there weeding around in her roses and her garden. That's going to be me one of these days, I guess. As I said, I haven't

told you what's happened to me that, I just thank the good Lord had me prepared to be very healthy, because it'll be six years November the thirtieth that I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. I don't know whether you know what that is. Well, it's a very complicated blood cancer that there's no cure. No cure.

The only symptom I had was my age and I was anemic. I went to, hadn't even thought about it, but I always go for my annual. I was one of those who went for my annual and I had uterine cancer that was discovered very easily, and I had surgery in '95 and everything was fine. This was—I went for my annual bloodwork here in Holdenville. The PA took care of me, and he's the PA—he's retired now, but took care of all the football boys and I taught his two kids. Everybody knew and loved him. He said, "You're anemic Karen. I'm going to put you on some really high dose of iron for a month and come back." When I went back he said, "That didn't help you a bit." I said, "Do you think I need to go to a hematologist?" He said, "I know exactly where I want to send you."

He sent me to Dr. Michael Bowen who is out of St. Anthony's. At that time he was still—and there were still doctors who were in the Cancer Care Associates in Oklahoma City, which is out there where Lakeside Hospital is on Hefner Parkway. I went to Dr. Bowen and he did different tests, bloods and so forth, and it kept coming back, "She needs a bone marrow test. This patient needs a bone marrow test." So he did the test and we went to Las Vegas. The basketball guys were playing in a—it's not really a tournament, but where they get to play different teams. A festival or something. We went to Las Vegas and I came back and I went to Dr. Bowen. It was November the thirtieth, one of those things you don't ever forget. He came in the exam room and he had this piece of paper and he said, "Well Karen, it's multiple myeloma."

Well, I had read enough. I didn't go online, but Bill and Dana had given me a *Merck [Manual]* medical book, which was really old. It was 2003. It did say it was not curable. Just rocked my world, and I was getting ready to have the family Christmas at my house before Christmas, because we do our Christmas with our family before Christmas, because they all want to be at home during Christmas Day. We understand—that's not a problem.

He started me on an infusion, which is a chemo, which you have to have a port for, but it was a low dose, and then also on a steroid. A very specialized steroid. He tried that. In multiple myeloma, if you don't know anything about it, it all has to do with the plasma cell percentage in your—I believe in your white blood count. In your white blood. Mine was 50 percent, which is very high. Very high. They don't really say a stage, but it was really high. So he tried me on that for a while and it kept going back up. It didn't really—he got it down once with just the steroids to 19 [percent].

During this time, course I'm going quite often and I'd go to St. Anthony's because that's...those doctors who were in the Cancer Care Associates in Oklahoma City, because the oncologist in Tulsa wanted to build, they were younger, and they wanted to build a big facility and bring in some Southern Kansas oncologists, make it a really big facility. My doctor and some of these doctors are older and they didn't want to put more money into a facility when they can go back to like Mercy Hospital and St. Anthony's Hospital, because they were doing that. They were working so many days at their hospital and then coming over to Cancer Care Associates. Then he tried me on that and it plateaued pretty much. It was still—kept going back up. I never did hurt. I never did have any bone...most people who have multiple myeloma, it starts in the bone in the back.

You know Tom Brokaw, well he has suffered with multiple myeloma and he's written a book called *A Lucky Life Interrupted*. He tells about his journey so far. Anyway, he did a complete skeletal x-ray and I had no bone involvement. Not a scan, but the actual x-rays. Long story short, then he said, "Okay, I want to send you to Dr. George Selby at OU Medical School to see about a stem cell transplant." I'm like, "Okay." So I went to Dr. Selby and he is fabulous. He is Native American and he wears his hair in a—he has a ponytail. Has the greatest bedside manner. I was seventy years old and what I'd read—like, I'm too old for even trying a stem cell transplant.

With multiple myeloma, and with some other blood cancers, they use your own stem cells. You don't have to match. They use your own stem cells. He checked me out and said, "Oh no, you're not too old. We'll get this started." With the 50 percent plasma cell percentage in my blood they wanted to get it down to 19 percent. In order to do that they had to get me some really, really hard stuff. Hard chemo. I had a port over on this side, but to have a stem cell transplant you have another port over here and it has a name, starts with an 'H'. It has two lines coming out of it, because this is how they do the stem cell transplant. You have to have that and it's right by the heart. So I had an appointment and I had that done at OU Medical Center.

They also went in and put me in the bone marrow unit for a couple of days to give me—when you have low-blood count they give you Neulasta shots and there's another shot to pull your platelets back up. Anybody that goes through any chemo, usually you do that. They also wanted to give me another round of this chemo. When I got in there—I was only supposed to be there seventy-two hours. I got to be in the bone marrow unit...it's on the seventh floor of the OU Medical Center, which is still Presbyterian Hospital. You go behind two doors and you don't come out until they let you out. (Laughs) It's on the seventh floor where it's the oncology—that's the oncology floor, but the bone marrow unit is eight separate rooms. Each room has its own air, oxygen, air-conditioning, it's a unit unto itself. So I got

to be in there to know what it's going to be like when I actually had the stem cell transplant. I was supposed to go home in seventy-two hours and somebody dropped the ball and they couldn't find a Neulasta shot in all of the hospitals in Oklahoma City over the weekend. Yes, ma'am.

Finchum

Wow.

Anderson

It was really...I happened to be the patient...the nurse who was supposed to be my liaison, my pipeline, she made several mistakes with me. That was one of them. She was let go, and she should've been. I got caught in another really bad spot that she caused, and she was gone. I put the—what's it called? I should have looked this up before we started. Anyway, I got that done. The next thing is, again, to give me enough of this really harsh chemo to bring the plasma cell down. They only actually gave me another one round of that because it pulled my blood count so low. They were kind of afraid to, because I was very lucky. I was very healthy. I had no underlying health problems. I mean, I was very healthy. I just thank the good Lord had me ready. (Laughs)

Finchum

Sounds like it.

Anderson

To be able to do this. When they did the bone marrow test again it was down to twenty. Okay, that's close enough. The next thing you do is you have to have your kidneys, lungs, and heart checked. You have to have the tests. The pulmonology test, you do the twenty-four hour urine where you take that into the lab, then the last thing was echo, which is the echo-heart. Well, before that, and I really didn't realize this, I had to go to where they do the chemo—where the chemo lab is, at the OU Medical Center at that time. Now it's in the big clinic that they have, the Peggy-Stephenson Cancer Clinic there on campus. They took fifteen vials of blood from me because they have to test—they have to have a vial of blood for all these different tests that they test for. I mean, it's just a long line, a long line. Didn't think a thing about it.

We went downstairs to eat lunch, I started getting cold—chilly. I thought, "Well maybe we need to take a little ride outside and I'll warm up before I go for the echo." I go into the echo and I'm shivering so badly I can't stop. The lady who did the echo, she had been there a long time. She was an older lady. She tried the warm blankets and all that and it didn't work. She called the stem cell transplant head nurse. Nancy Kohrt is her name. They said, "Go ahead and finish the test. If you've started, go ahead and finish the echo while she's there. Then you get her to the ER." What they were afraid of is that I had contracted, somehow, maybe through the port, a bacterial infection, which is terrible. It would've been terrible for me.

They took me up to the emergency room and on the trauma end, where the traumas come in. They keep me there, of course watching me, and they take the culture. Then you've got to wait five days to know whether the culture is going to do anything. It took them until the middle of the night to get me into where they wanted me, which was on the second floor where I think they had some heart transplants on that floor. Then they couldn't access the port to do any bloodwork, because they were afraid that's where it might be. They had to use my veins and they gave me Vancomycin, which is really, really harsh on your veins. So you can imagine what my arm looked like at the end of the five days, and nothing happened. I went home, recovered.

They don't want you to come in for the stem cell transplant. They give you a book. This and this happens, but it's very antiquated. Somebody needs to go through and completely redo it because one thing they tell you is your carpets—if you've got carpeting, you got to shampoo all your carpets. You cannot have any living plants in the house. Everything has to be dust free. I mean they tell you all this. You're already so stressed anyway, knowing what you're going to go through. Then they give you that information.

Oh, something I left out. Excuse me, I left out the collection. I'm sorry, I need to go back. Before I did the test, before the last thing with the test, then they've got to collect your stem cells. They do that at the OBI, which is that building right there close to OU Medical Center. They've enlarged it. It's twice as large as it used to be and it's really nice. They have two machines and the nurses know what all that means (laughs), because it's actually blood going in and coming out, going in and coming out. It's harvesting your good cells, your good stem cells. You have to do that first. I did that right after I got this port. That's what they access to do the stem cell collection also. It's a six-hour—one time it's six hours.

Finchum

And you're awake while this is going on?

Anderson

Oh yeah, you're watching the machine doing all this. The nurse was so nice. Of course I had to get up and go to the bathroom. The man who was in there, he was a Vietnam vet and I think it was orange—from the orange—what do you call it? Agent Orange! I don't know, his wife was with him, but I'm just thinking that's probably—because he talked about being a Vietnam vet. It just makes me think of that. They set it up to start on Monday. I went in Monday and my white blood count was not high enough. Okay, there's a shot they give you. It has to be given at a certain time in the day for it to completely...I mean it just knocks your white cells off the roof. It makes them go up really fast, but then they come down really fast. So it's very time driven.

I had to go to the OU Medical Center to get it. I couldn't go until after three o'clock, and I was going to go to where they do have the chemo lab, at that

time. Which their waiting room was not any bigger than this kind of circumference right there with a desk, filing cabinet—I mean, maybe four people could sit there. I mean it was so small. Anyway, I couldn't go until after three o'clock because, again, the timing of it boosting up my white count before the next morning. I had no clue and they don't say anything about how many we were able to harvest today.

I went that first day, and I went in there and there was just a nurse who was taking the place of the regular receptionist. All she knew was she was to leave at three o'clock and all these people in here. I think I gave them my name and there was another lady, I felt so sorry for her. She was already on oxygen and she was really in bad shape. Her daughter was with her. I sat there and sat there. Nobody came out from where they were actually doing the chemo—lab. Nobody came out and said anything until late—we sat there and sat there and sat there. The nurse left. When her shift was over, she left. “Okay. What do we do?”

Well this smart-alecky little nurse came to the door with her hands on her hip and she said, “Y'all are still here? We're closing at five o'clock!” It's like, “Five o'clock? What do you mean five o'clock? I've been here since...”, and this other lady too, “We've been sitting...” probably for two hours, close to it. I was so mad I was in tears. I rushed back down to Bill. He was watching TV, in a place where he could watch TV. Rushed back to Bill, and what she had not told me, what this nurse had not told me, is that anytime you walk out of the hospital you had to re-register. So I couldn't go up to the chemo lab, get my shot, and walk out. I had to be re-registered, which makes sense! Insurance, Medicare if you're on Medicare, but I wasn't thinking about that. Somebody needed to tell me. She didn't tell me. She'd sent me a letter and it was not in the letter.

I think that was the, as they say, the straw that broke the camel's back. I rushed down there and they felt really sorry for me (laughs), and they whizzed me through that process and got me back up there. Then the other nurse—there were several nurses up there, of course, in the chemo lab. She said, “Oh that's fine. We'll be here a long time. Don't worry about it.” But that young smart-alecky nurse just—(sigh). So then I knew what I had to do from then on, that I had to go re-register that way. That wasn't a problem, just to know it. So that happened to me.

Then—okay, so my blood count—I mean my blood count was not high enough to do it Monday, so they started on Tuesday. They did all the way through Friday, four days of being in there for six hours a day, because they were trying to get as many stem cells as possible because he had told me. He said, “Karen, we hope to get five million. That way if it doesn't work we can come back and do it again.” “Okay. Sounds good to me.” So leaving the OBI that day, I called Nancy Kohrt, who was the head nurse of the BMU,

and I said, “Okay, this is Karen. How many stem cells did you all get?” She said, “Two point one million.” I said, “That’s a long way from five million.” She said, “Karen, we were thrilled to get that many stem cells from you because of all the chemo you’ve had.” I went, “Oh, okay.”

That was back in March. Now we’re getting into May and June. They don’t want to do a stem cell transplant on the weekend, because they want their best nurses there, and there are certain nurses that are trained what to do. Then they pull—depending on their number that they have in the bone marrow unit, if all the rooms are full then there’s eight people, but if maybe there’s three then they will pull someone off of the oncology wing and come over and help. And they would do that on the weekend.

I’m trying to think of how many hours they worked, what their hour schedule was. Of course they were fabulous. The nurses were just fabulous. They did it on Monday, I think it was. I’m trying to think if it was July. It was after the Fourth of July that they did it. Like on a Monday. It’s just like having a blood transfusion, but once they take those stem cells out of cold storage—freezing them, they’ve got thirty minutes to get them started in you...

Finchum

Wow, okay.

Anderson

...so that’s why it’s so timed. Before you have that done you have another round of chemo that knocks everything on to zero. I mean just close as they can get you to zero. They did that on Friday, then Saturday—I’m trying to think if we did it on Friday. Then Saturday and Sunday you recuperate. Then Monday is when they start the stem cell transplant back, because it all starts back up again.

I was actually in the bone marrow unit for eighteen days, but it was after the—I should’ve gone back and looked. When Dr. Holter, she’s a team [member]. There’s team of doctors in the BMU, and Dr. Selby would be on two weeks, then off two weeks. She’d be on two weeks, then off two weeks. They would rotate like that. So he was on for the stem cell transplant, but then his two weeks he was off. She was more or less the one in charge of me when—her name’s Jennifer Holter.

I’ll never forget the morning—course they wake you up all the time doing all kinds of things to you. All you want to do is sleep and rest. It’s quite a deal, and you can only eat certain things, for a while, because your immune system is so low. Anyway, the morning she came in at seven-thirty and woke me up. Said, “Karen, you’ve engrafted,” which meant that it took. I was in there a total of eighteen days. They tell you before you go in, which is right, that something around three weeks that you would be in there that long.

Then of course I came out and I'm not a very big person anyway, and I knew I was in trouble because I'd lost so much weight. The dietician for OU Medical Center is an OSU graduate. I can't think of her name now. Right after I got out of stem cell transplant and came home, and then they want you to come back a certain length of time because then they test your blood and see if you're okay for them to let you go. She wanted me to start on these—well, that's when I went to—I went into the Peggy-Stephenson Clinic and it was just newly opened. She saw me with my OSU bag and she had seen me with Dr. Selby, so she knew that I was going to go for a stem cell transplant and I was OSU. She wanted me to go on these really high-calorie shakes that you make. I'm like, "I don't think I can do that." She said, "Okay, well try this." And there's a product—it's a Carnation breakfast drink, but it comes in the small cans like this. (Gestures) In it it has five-hundred-and-some-odd calories, with all the nutrients you need. So she had me start just like a fourth, half, you know, and drink it so many times a day because I had to get some weight on me, get some strength.

Bill and I are walkers, and as I said, I'm a gardener. I'm really physically pretty active. I did that and that started me back on the good. I didn't miss any—I told people, "I didn't miss any football!" I didn't miss anything OSU! That was fall 2011, so we did so well with Brandon and what's his name. Then in October—what did they do? They did a special blood test that they sent off to California. Nancy Kohrt—I hadn't really been turned back over to my regular oncologist, Dr. Bowen, at this point. She called here at the house and she said, "Karen, you are in remission." Of course you know lots of prayers, lots of prayers there.

Then I had been on what's called Revlimid, R-E-V-L-I-M-I-D. I've been on it for a good three years. It's like—it derives from the drug that caused the babies to be born in the sixties without arms and legs. So it's so highly—it's more highly regulated than any narcotic. Specialty pharmacies are the only ones where they come from. Then of course you've got your insurance and then your oncologist. I'm on a five milligram a day for twenty-one days, then you rest for seven, and then you start it up all back over again.

The specialty pharmacy—it all starts with the nurses sending the request to Celgene, which is the manufacturer of Revlimid. Then that comes to the specialty pharmacy, which the insurance is now Walgreen's Specialty Pharmacy, and they're in Oregon. Celgene is in New Jersey. Okay, it comes to Oregon and then my insurance, Blue Cross Blue Shield, is in Arizona. Then it comes to me, for it to be delivered by UPS or FedEx, because it has to be signed for. You have to do that and you have four days, because they overnight it. You can't receive it on Monday. So you've got four days to get it in, unless you get it the next Tuesday, the day you start over again.

So it's—I don't know how people do it who are not A personalities like I am. Because you have to be so in control and know your—I mean, you've got to have it. You've got to have the people out there...my doctor's nurses are wonderful. He's got two nurses, Tori and Lisa. Lisa's been with him for over twenty years, probably twenty-five years, anyway now. They're the ones that orchestrate all of this of course. The nurses are the ones who do that, but it is my maintenance drug.

He's changed now where I just do an annual bone marrow test, but when your doctor tells you you're different it's like, "I don't want to hear this!" He told me a long time ago, he said, "Karen," he said, "There are really three main pelvic configurations for women. You don't fit in that." I'm like, "Okay." So I'm difficult for him to get the bone marrow test. He's so gentle. He does a topical to go in. Then he'll say, "Karen, does it hurt here? Can you feel...?" I mean he's just so kind and considerate. He doesn't want to hurt to you.

In November when he didn't get any aspiration, and that's what he's got to get to get, for them to test for the percentage of the plasma cell and that's the only way I know really how I am, because I feel really good. So when November—he didn't get any aspiration. It's like (sigh), don't... So Lisa, one of the two nurses, said, "Karen, we can do that here at St. Anthony's in the inner something or other area on fourth floor," where they do colonoscopies and they do bone marrow test. Because you're out for just that long. Barely know you're out, but they can be more aggressive. The radiologists can be. So I did that in December and that's the way to go. It's easier for me, it's easier for Dr. Bowen.

Then in 2013, I always do my mammogram and I do it—I'm with Oklahoma Breast Care Center. I have been for a long time. I went in for the annual mammogram and the radiologist came in with the technician and he said, "I want to show you, there's some spots." I'm like, "Okay." He said, "I think these are malignant, but we need to do a biopsy to check." Of course that rattled my cage pretty big time. I don't have any breast cancer anywhere in my family, but I had been on what's called Fem Ring for a long time, since I had my hysterectomy when I was fifty-five and had a lot of trouble with hot flashes and night-sweats. So my doctor had had me on that. [The Fem Ring put 0.05 mg daily directly into my system] and it had worked perfectly for that. He did the biopsy and actually he called me on Friday the thirteenth. We're getting ready to go to Stillwater for the first ballgame, and I was out here repairing part of the netting. (Laughs)

He calls me, his name is Dr. Falk. The first time I saw him, when he came in to tell me he needed to do a biopsy, he said, "My name is Dr. Falk, you know, like Columbo Peter Falk." That's the way he introduces himself. Nicest guy. So he said, "It was malignant, Karen." I said, "What do I do?"

He said, "And there were two cancers there." I said, "What do I do?" He said, "We need to get you in to a surgeon." At that time there at St. Anthony's they had one breast oncologist and she was a board certified surgeon. Her name's Dr. Kertrisa McWhite, and she looks like Courtney Paris. She was a tall drink of water. So I went to her, and I went to Dr. Bowen. I went back to my oncologist and he said, "Karen, as small as you are I think if you have a mastectomy, you won't have to have any other treatment." I'm like—because I was just thinking, that chemo. I think for a woman losing your hair—and when I went through the bone marrow unit I was bald. It wasn't—I didn't have any stubby anything. I mean when they gave me that last...

Finchum

Completely gone.

Anderson

Yeah, it was completely gone. I tell you what—and I had a wonderful wig. A friend of mine took me to a place in Oklahoma City and she walked into the door and she said, "Karen, that's your hair." It was. I mean it was great. I still have it. I have two wigs. But anyway, I thought, "Oh my gosh, can I go through that again?" He said, "I just think that's probably what would happen." I said, "Okay." So Dr. McWhite and I discussed it, and she thought the same thing. So I had a mastectomy on the left side October the first, 2013, the day the government shut down. (Laughs) Oh well, anyway. So she was still at St. Anthony's, but they were trying to get her to come to Mercy. Course there's a group of them at Mercy, and she was the only one at St. Anthony's. So she moved over to Mercy.

When she called me after the path—and she only took about six or seven lymph nodes, but when she called me with the results she said, "Karen, they were clean," but she said, "I'm sure glad we did a mastectomy because there was another different kind of cancer in that breast." Lobular. Mine was the in situ and then the other one. In situ is it's just sitting there and the other one can be more aggressive. They're the same kind more or less, but the lobular is something different. It's a different tissue. Course I'm like, "Oh my gosh," you know, "What?"

Backstory here is the port that was put in over here had metal in it. You cannot have an MRI if you have any metal. When this port was put in me in 2010 it was done at St. Anthony's and it's the surgeon, general surgeon, that does a lot of the surgery, but I was a cancer patient then. I should have never had a port put in me, with all the different ports that are out there, that had metal in it. It's like, "Oh my gosh, what do I do? What do I do?" Because I couldn't have an MRI. That's really the definitive thing they want, is a MRI.

So in the meantime I had gone back to Dr. Bowen, this was after the mastectomy. I was doing fine I thought. Went back to him. He says, "Yeah, I think you can go back on the Revlimid now. You're surgical place is

mending.” I went back on the Revlimid. I started getting really ferociously red in this area and it just kept growing. I went back to Dr. McWhite, and she had had to go to New Jersey to some continuing education and she was gone. When her nurse saw me she said, “I’m calling the doctor on call to come look at you, Karen.” So when he came in—course he didn’t know me. He said—he gave me—it’s a real broad antibiotic for lots of different things. I’m trying to think about what it’s called. It’s called something. So I took that and it didn’t do anything; it kept growing. I ended up—I’m trying to think.

Well, I called Lisa because I was still draining. I think I still had the drain tube in. I still had that. I called Lisa and she said, “Karen, Dr. Bowen wants to see you today.” I was in my pajamas and Bill was off playing golf somewhere. I said, “I can’t get there today, but I’ll be there tomorrow.” So as soon as he saw me he said, “We’re starting you on a unit of Vancomycin today. I want eleven consecutive infusions.” I’m like, “Okay?” Well we had a football game that weekend. (Laughs) The other nurse, Tori, knew somebody at Stillwater Medical Center and set it up for me to come in and get that infusion in the ER for Saturday and Sunday. (Laughs) So I didn’t miss any ballgames. She never did think it was cellulitis, but Dr. Bowen said, “Karen, it was cellulitis.” I said, “It was because I went back on the Revlimid,” because looking at every month of course when they send they give you all the side effects and one of them is a rash, skin rash. And it was topical, never really did itch, but oh I looked awful.

So when it was all over I looked like a weathered prune. She said, “No Karen, you look like a tufted pillow.” She said, “I can fix that and make you a straight line, get it all even so you don’t look so puffy.” She said, “Then I can take out the port.” I’m like, “Eh,” a little nervous because if I hadn’t of had that port in and the Vancomycin, it would’ve been...so I was a little hesitant. She says, “Karen, if we have to do anything else we’ll do a PICC line. We’ll put a PICC line in.” I said, “Okay.” She said, “It’ll take me ten minutes to take out the port when I’m repairing you,” so that’s what we did.

I had a MRI last spring, and it was okay. Dr. Falk has ordered one every year for ten years. I think it’s because of the other cancer in the breast. I follow him. Wherever he is he’s going to read my record, read my report. He did not know about the stem cell transplant until last year when he came to the door after the mammogram. I told him, “You don’t know this about me. I’ve had a stem cell transplant. I’ve been diagnosed with multiple myeloma and I’m on drug maintenance, hopefully, for a long time.” This year when I went in I went to the south clinic because that’s where he was that day because they go back and forth from the north clinic out there by Mercy. I don’t know whether you’re familiar with the Oklahoma Breast Care Center...

Finchum

A little bit.

Anderson

...anyway, she came back in. She was the same technician that took care of me last year. She remembered me. She came in and she says, "Get dressed, Dr. Falk wants to see you in his office." I was like, "Oh I don't know." (Laughs) I was a little scared, but he came out from behind his desk and he hugged me. He said, "I wanted you to see your pictures." So he had both of the mammograms up on the wall, and it took up almost the whole wall, to show me. He said, "Now last year when she did it you hadn't had the port taken out too long, so she wasn't real aggressive with you. This year, and there's a little white spot here, see that? Then over on this one, she could be more aggressive this year so it's a lot more white." He wanted me to see that. Then he said, "Now what about the stem cell transplant?" I told him my story. I don't think he's ever had a patient that had both these things. The technician she's sitting there—it's like... (laughs) "You've been through all this?" "Yes I have..."

Finchum

And here to tell the tale and didn't miss a game.

Anderson

And didn't miss a game, gang! I told them, I said, "I didn't miss any games!" They laughed because they—I always go into St. Anthony's and when I go to see Dr. Bowen, the lady receptionist...course some of them have changed, but they're not all the same. I always wear—and I've got orange and black on somewhere. Or it's—they know. It's jewelry or whatever, I'm dressed. If they didn't...one time, a long time ago, I didn't wear any orange and black. Maybe it was when I was getting the infusion. It only lasted about an hour and so I was ready to go eat. I never was ill with it. The ladies that have breast cancer, it's really tough. But anyway, "Where's your orange and black, Karen?" I thought, "Okay. That's what my wardrobe is anyway, I might as well (laughs) wear something every time I go."

Of course Dr. Bowen, my doctor, is so—he's a calm man. He's probably in his early sixties I think. The thing about him is he and his partner first started here. He's from the Charleston area. He grew up around Mount Pleasant. That's where he went to medical school, that's where he met his wife, and they have a place in Mount Pleasant. They go, I think, about twice a year. Well, Bill plays in a golf tournament. It's called the World Am, it's an amateur golf tournament and it's in Myrtle Beach where you get to play these different golf courses. He just goes to play, just enjoys playing on the pretty golf courses. We go to Charleston for three days before we drive on in to Myrtle Beach. My doctor has told us neat things to go see, places to eat, and so we have a real bond with him.

He even gave us the address to their place. So two years ago Bill had played golf at a golf course that was real close to where their place would be. I think he used his GPS and we found it. I took pictures of it, made some

prints, and I took those to him. You'd thought I had hung the moon. He said, "My wife will love these pictures!" So we just have a real bond, and he's a real calm influence on me. There's been a time or two where I've gotten really scared and he's just calmed me down.

He started here in Holdenville. He and his partner started here when they first came to Oklahoma and Holdenville. We had, oh maybe, five or six doctors. We had a really great medical area here. He said, "The doctors in Holdenville"—He explained to me, "You have to get your internal credentials first before you can go"—you have to be board certified internal medicine before you can go for hematology or oncology...

Finchum

Specialist.

Anderson

...a specialist on top of that. He said, "So the doctors in Holdenville wanted to send us their internal problems and we wanted to do the hematology-oncology." So the PA and our family doctor know him, know who he is, so they send all their patients to him. He's got a real fun sense of humor. When Tom Brokaw's book came out, I had seen where—you know, television, and knew that he had gone through some kind of treatment. I didn't know what he had done. When the book came out, I had to get a copy of it and read it. I took it with me to my June appointment and he was so interested in it, so in July we made sure we gave him a copy of it.

I've taken he and Dr. White, McWhite, vegetables out of the garden. Dr. Bowen loves fig preserves. I've taken him fig preserves. (Laughs) Anyway, we just really—he just better be there for a while longer you know. Course it was an oncologist, a hematologist, they do the bone marrow test, but it's not like a surgeon. It's not like they're in surgery, and he has such great nurses that really do a lot...

Finchum

Makes a big difference.

Anderson

...and my dad was—I have to tell you this. I know it's getting late. Oh my gosh, it's twelve thirty.

Finchum

It's okay.

Anderson

My dad was one of those who didn't go to the doctor unless they had a broken leg. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer way back in the '80s, before they knew what a PSA was. They did the surgery, but they said, "We think some of the cells sluffed off. So you'll need to be watched." Five years later it came back in his lymph nodes, so he went back in and the doctor took his testicles, because they think that's the root—where it was. We had four more good years driving to Stillwater, going to everything he wanted to do. During this time's when he did the library. Then it went to his back, into

his bone. Of course that was the end. He kept going. This oncologist kept my dad going when they were giving—he was giving him some experimental medicine. It was back before M.D. Anderson. So the doctors did what they could do. He kept my dad going for, I don't know, a number of years. I knew his name and I knew that he was at the Oklahoma City Clinic.

There was a Dr. Ganick that was in St. Anthony's Hospital, in their Cancer Institute. In the back of my mind I'm thinking, "I wonder if that's the doctor that took care of my dad." Course he was like really young and his office was in the Oklahoma City Clinic and then he doctored at Presbyterian Hospital. I remember seeing on a wall he had all of his credentials up there, and he was from Boston. I never did talk to him that much, but when the ladies told me, "Yeah, Dr. Ganick still has his Boston clip. He still has that Boston accent." You know, like, "Oh my gosh, he's got to be the Dr. Ganick that took care of my dad," and he was going to retire. "Okay, I've got to at least speak to him before he leaves."

It was a God thing because when we went in July I mentioned it to one of the receptionists and something came up about him retiring. She said, "He remembers patients. He doesn't remember names, but he will come and say, 'Brandy, do you remember so and so?'" Because she worked with him for a long time. She'd been in the Cancer Associate's with him. I said, "I need to talk to him. I think he was my dad's doctor for a number of years and kept him going back in the day." She said, "This is his last month. He's retiring at the end of July." So, you know, she said, "I'll tell Lisa that you want to talk to Dr. Ganick, see if he's still here."

We went on in to Dr. Bowen and I told Dr. Bowen that. He said, "Okay, I'm going to go see if he's here. I'll go get him in his office." He came out, big grin on his face, and I said, "Dr. Ganick, you took care of my dad for years and kept him going and we just appreciate all...duh duh duh...all through that." He said, "What was his name?" I said, "His name was Veldo Brewer." He went, "Veldo? That name rings a bell." I said, "What I remember is that you gave my dad a Gillette razor and he either shaved himself with it or he was shaved with it every day for the rest of his life."

He went, "Okay, when I was going to medical school in Boston," that's where the Gillette people were, I mean whoever the man was who started Gillette, and he said, "I moonlighted and worked for Gillette." He said, "He was always so good to his employees." That rang a bell with him. I got to visit with him and then I told him what I—multiple myeloma, had a stem cell transplant. He brought up Tom Brokaw's name. He looked and then I said, "Dr. Bowen is my doctor." And he looked at me and he said, "He's outstanding!" And I said, "I know, I know." You know, it had to be a God-

thing to be able to talk to the doctor who took care of my dad, because that was—he died in '92...

Finchum *Considerable, twenty years or so.*

Anderson ...considerably so. I'm sorry...

Finchum *It's fine. We haven't got to Holdenville yet though. So if you want to touch on that for a little bit then we'll cut it off.*

Anderson Our town—how would I describe our town? Our town was really dying. It was really going down until we got the CCA prison and Tyson's came in. Now we did have, at one time there were probably 8,000 people in town and some good schools. We had the hospital. As I said it was all one and then they moved out here. The hospital burned partially. I'm trying to think how many years ago it was, and it was really kind of a good thing, because it needed to be updated so badly. It was just a small rural hospital. It's really what you'd call a critical care hospital, and we're connected to St. Anthony's which all these smaller hospitals are now, connected. That's the way it is with Obamacare.

I've always been proud of being a College of Education major degree from OSU, because there weren't a lot of that around Holdenville because so many would go to East Central, because that's East Central State Teacher's College. That's what they called it. Now they call it East Central State University, I think. So many would go there and get their degree, which is not a thing wrong with that, but I was always really proud of my OSU degree.

We had a lot of peanuts here, a lot of peanut growers. Peanuts were big. Then when allotments went away, then that went away. So we've had cattle. Cattle are big here. Not really row crops, a lot of hay, and we don't really have that much manufacturing companies anymore. We've had a couple come in that are kind of small, but not a big company like Tyson or a big deal like the CCA (Corrections Corporation of America). The CCA went from not minimum, but the next one, the next level (medium). We also have a work, what's it called, a work release right at the side of the CCA. Then they added more beds to make it—the med and the max. So we have both here. There's nine-hundred-and-some-odd inmates.

Finchum *That's why you see the sign that says, "Don't pick up hitchhikers, they may be escaped inmates."*

Anderson And Tyson's has gone through a lot of changes. A lot of evolving. A lot of people still have their pig farms around here...

Finchum

Not chickens, pigs?

Anderson

It's pigs. I think they've done real well, but when Tyson's first came in here they brought some great people. We had some great professional people come in with Tyson to build it and then they've all scattered. We [haven't had] any of the—I'd say the main people that started it here for quite a while. We still have the pig farms and we still have Tyson's. Both those places gave jobs to people. I'd say probably the hospital and the school probably are the biggest employers in our town.

We have another business downtown that's kind of—it's lower now than it was. It's called Visual Lease. What that business does is they bounce off a satellite and they can see in all these counties all over the United States, wherever they have been contracted to, to basically look for oilfield equipment that hasn't been taxed. It kind of comes down to that. They have counties in Louisiana, and Colorado, and Oklahoma, and I don't know where else. The man who started it, and his brother, that man passed away, and his wife was the County Assessor here. He's the one who started the business or the two of them started the business, but with the oil down they've had to let people go. They don't have nearly as many employees as they did at one time. They took a downtown building which, part of it was a drugstore, and completely re-did it. It looks so nice. They really did a good job of redoing it, renovating it. I'm trying to think of what else...

Finchum

It's the county seat I noticed.

Anderson

Yes, it's the county seat. Anybody will tell you...of course we had the old county courthouse [that] was the square. The thing about Oklahoma courthouses is—the old ones are not pretty at all. In genealogy going to Iowa, and some of these other states, they're gorgeous. They're built in the Victorian age where they had the turrets and everything. They're just gorgeous, and then you come to Oklahoma and they're these blocks. (Laughs) So this courthouse was built, maybe in the '60s. They tore down the other one and built this one. I don't think it's ever been big enough. They've always had problems, I think, with leakage and it's kind of dark. The windows are at the top so it's not real light in there. Course the jail is down in the basement and kind of looks like a dungeon. (Laughs) Not real pretty down there. Anyway, that's what we have. That's what they built, whoever it was at the time who built it.

We have quite a few Baptist churches here. One of the Baptist churches has built a new building, added on, that'll be I'm sure, an activity building, which is really nice. We have, gosh, if I tried to start naming all of the Baptist churches in Holdenville I don't know if I could name them all. Catholic churches, don't know whether you came by the Catholic Church when you came in...

Finchum *I may have. Probably wasn't paying attention.*

Anderson ...well, we have one Catholic Church. The Methodist Church, the First Christian Church, and the First Baptist Church, were all built around the same time. The First Christian Church had to close their doors, but they have a Hispanic group who are holding church there. Course they like to do music. They do a lot of music. We have an Episcopal Church, it's just down the street from us, Episcopal Church. Presbyterian Church is no longer even a building here. There's a small one in Wewoka. We are really in Baptist country. This is Baptist Bible Belt right in here, so we have lots of different Baptist churches.

We have the lower grade school which is pre-k through third grade, which is Ethel Reed, or Reed, or Parkview, whichever one you want to call it. We have new safe rooms there, which that gave us four more classrooms. Then the next school is the Thomas School, which is right down the road. It also has safe rooms, which gives them more classroom space. It's the newest of the buildings. Then the high school is really old. It's in very bad condition, so they're going to try a bond issue this next month to start doing some work on it. It was built in the '20s I think, it's quite elderly. It's right across from the public library.

Finchum *You would assume then that if it was built then that the WPA funds may have built the stadium.*

Anderson The WPA built the stadium. Did you come that way?

Finchum *No, I just...*

Anderson Okay, built the stadium, swimming pool, and then down through the park there is a draw that they build that had the rock on it. Of course most of it's gone now, but yeah, built the swimming pool and built the stadium, football stadium. We have another sport complex on the other side of town there close to Tyson where you've got soccer fields and baseball, softball, track, over there. I'm trying to think of anything else. What would be something else I could say about Holdenville? We have a bed and breakfast. Our friends went in and took this old hotel and completely re-did it to a bed and breakfast. It's still—they're not in it anymore, but they're the ones who did it. It's really pretty. They kept a lot of the old inside. They also had a kitchen where they had food, and if they had been open it's where we would go, but they're not open.

Finchum *You want to say something about Boone?*

Anderson Well, T. Boone Pickens has been...he has loved his hometown. He, I think, left here when he was a freshman in high school to go to Amarillo, but he kept longtime ties with several men that were in school with him at the time and with an aunt here and his grandparents, his grandmother. Anytime it was anything in a paper about T. Boone Pickens it usually had 'from Holdenville.' I mean, that was pretty well upfront that he was from Holdenville. Back when his, not this marriage, but the marriage before, the lady who had her own money in her own right, I can't I think of her name, she was the big animal advocate.

Finchum *Mustangs or something, wild horses.*

Anderson Yes, yes. For his eightieth birthday, I believe, the house he grew up in, my friend bought it for her and they took out the inside, all the walls and everything inside, it was just a shell. They put it on the lowboy trailer and took it to his ranch. She had it restored and made kind of a little museum in there of all these things to do with Holdenville. That was what she did for his eightieth birthday. Another friend of ours, of mine, she's in the insurance business, her family, her uncle was one of these elderly gentleman that was one of his good friends. So we got together a whole lot of things to do with our church. His grandfather was one of our very early, earliest, ministers. He was baptized and all that, went through confirmation in our church, his family did. We sent all that to him hoping maybe we'd get another donation. (Laughs) He thanked us and it goes in my museum, but we didn't actually ask for anything, but we did that.

My friend's uncle was the man who was his good friend. And he always would call and check on him and check on his wife. He was just really—he was really close to Holdenville. When he came, when we did the big dedication, came to the school and the kids performed for him. We had a big luncheon at the bed and breakfast. You know, cover to cover people. He talked about how he learned his value of work here in Holdenville. He was a paperboy, and learned that and learned those—mother and grandmother and aunt made sure he did his due diligence, did his work, and also told that he didn't tell lies, and didn't steal. He felt like his value system came from Holdenville, I guess you'd say, and he's just very fond of Holdenville.

Then I found out about the—when he gave \$100,000 to the hospital foundation that he was the first cesarean born baby in Holdenville. The doctor was a Dr. Wallace. Evidently the families knew each other because they were members of our church too. The Wallaces were, the doctor and his wife. It was either they were both going to die or he could save one of them. He was able to save both of them. That was back in the '20s, because he's eighty—is he eighty-six? He just turned eighty-six I think.

Finchum *Somewhere in there, yes.*

Anderson He knew my dad. I've been—well, right after I retired...no, it was before I retired. Right after my folks died, Jerry Gill called me and he said, "Would you like to be a judge for Homecoming?" "Well yes! I'd love to be a judge for Homecoming!" He was the parade marshal. He had his blonde wife with him. I think then I said something about my dad, course my dad had just died. He said, "Oh yeah! I remember Mr. Veldo," duh duh duh duh duh duh. I'm trying to think, when he came here he again said something about knowing my dad. He knew people from Holdenville and OSU. I think that some people think that all he's done is for athletics, but it's not just been for athletics at all.

Finchum *No, and you said the library's named after his mother?*

Anderson Yes. We definitely...and the two ladies in the library I taught. That's the thing about teaching as long as I taught here, I know so many people. Good, bad, and otherwise. I've never had to serve on a jury...

Finchum *Yet. (Laughs)*

Anderson No. I'm past the age now. I don't have to now.

Finchum *There's an age rule?*

Anderson Well, you can choose. The only time I ever was called it wasn't anything to do with anybody I knew that was being charged, but it was going to be really tough, tough deal because it was a black guy and a young white girl. He was supposed to have molested her. It was a he said she said thing, but the assistant district attorney was in Holdenville Foundation, Education Foundation with me. She was on the board. As soon as I said that the other lawyer chunked me off. That was to be an alternate anyway, so it was like 'phew' I didn't have to do that. Anyway, some of my best friends are former students. That's just the way it is in a small town.

Finchum *When did you retire? 19...*

Anderson Nineteen ninety-five, so it's twenty years. I still get people who say, "Have you retired?" (Laughs) I said, "Yeah! Yes! A long time ago, you know." (Laughs) I've been—Bill and I have been very blessed. He's had some health issue things too, but I probably more so than him.

Finchum *Proud supporters of OSU?*

Anderson Oh yeah.

Finchum *I usually ask, but people don't always know the song Alma Mater...*

Anderson My dad could sing it. Well my dad sang—he sang the old one.

Finchum *OAMC?*

Anderson Yes, he sang that. He did. Yeah, we sing the Alma Mater, I mean whatever, wherever we are, when we win. I know it, I couldn't tell you right now. I tell you, the thing—when you're on chemo you know things, but it just (whoosh), it comes and it goes.

Finchum *I don't have that excuse, but it still happens.*

Anderson It does age wise too, but that is another layer (laughter) on top of it, I guess you'd say. I'm sure we need to go eat, and then we can do the downtown if you'd rather—however you want to do it. You know what you need to do.

Finchum *If you're finished I'll say thank you for talking with me today. You've got lots to say, I know.*

Anderson I'm my daddy's daughter. The man who was in the funeral home here, he and my dad were good friends. They were in Rotary together. He told me one time, he says, "Your dad should've been a politician because he knows someone from someplace everywhere in Oklahoma," because all the work that they did. Then when the KATY Railroad came along then he really knew all those people out there too.

Finchum *Could've been a senator or a governor.*

Anderson Well, he was president of the Oklahoma Contractor's Association. He was in their—he's in their—I don't know whether it's called a Hall of Fame, but anyway, he was just very well-known over the state. I heard somebody say, "You need to write a book." I'm like, "Ugh." (Laughs) He was a pretty outstanding guy...

Finchum *It sounds like you do then.*

Anderson ...and my mother was the lady who kept him in line. (Laughs) Anyway...

Finchum *Good genes all the way around.*

Anderson ...but he loved kids. My folks should've had several. They would take care of other peoples' kids. In fact, as I said I was really a miracle. My mother gave birth to a sister who only lived about three days. Back in '37 she had uremic poisoning, which they didn't know what to do with. They took her by ambulance to Oklahoma City. I don't know which hospital she went to right now, may have been St. Anthony's, and delivered the baby. She lived

three days. The doctor said that my mother would never ever be able to have another baby. They lived in Ada at that time.

I've got a picture, an article about her, her name was Dr. Catherine Brydia, and she had that Buster Brown haircut and she was a female doctor, which was kind of unusual back then. She wasn't really an OBGYN, but I'm sure she was probably known as the baby-doctor. So Mother comes home and they were just devastated because they wanted children. So she said, "Well, we'll see." (Laughs) My mother would say—make a—"Well, we'll see." Three years later I came along and I guess I was really a miracle to be here. I was—and my daddy named me after my mother. So I'm Daisy Karen Anderson.

Finchum *Daisy?*

Anderson That's my legal name. So everywhere I go I say, "It's Daisy Karen Anderson. I go by Karen." "Oh! Daisy's so cute! We like that name!" (Laughs) It's like when I went to Stillwater and I had bi-sci, biological science, the big classroom when you've got 350 people in there, and they go, "Is Daisy Brewer here?" It's like, "Uh, I got to change that. (Laughs) Not going to stay that way." It's not that I'm not proud of my name, but I'm Karen. So my folks were crazy about our boys. I mean they were crazy about our boys and crazy about the girls they married. I'm very proud of them because they came from families that had not a clue what a college education was. My folks helped both of them.

Finchum *And OSU served them well.*

Anderson Look at the time. I know you probably need to [stop].

Finchum *I'll say thank you for talking with me.*

Anderson I'm so glad I could, Tanya.

----- End of interview -----