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DWIGHT "PAT" PATTERSON  
1912-1999

1993  
Rancher and Father of  
AZ Baseball Spring Training



The following is an oral history interview with Dwight "Pat" Patterson (**DP**) conducted by Zona Davis Lorig (**ZL**) for Historical League, Inc. on December 22, 1992.

*Transcripts for website edited by members of Historical League, Inc.  
Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Historical Society Museum Library at Papago Park,  
Tempe, Arizona.*

**ZL:** Congratulations on being named History Maker for 1993. That's quite an honor.

**DP:** Thank you very much. I don't deserve it but I enjoy it because I'm with a good bunch of people. Some are old friends.

**ZL:** That makes it really special doesn't it?

**DP:** Yes, I've known Jack Williams ever since high school days and I've known John Rhodes. When he ran for Congress I was his financial chairman the first two terms. Of course, Bill Kajikawa I knew when he was in high school; and everybody knows Erma Bombeck. Bud Jacobson has been a great friend to the arts. It's a good crew and I'm happy to be with them.

**ZL:** Your great-grandfather Captain White came to the Kyrene area, which is now known as South Tempe, after the Civil War and your grandfather D. G. Buck came from Texas and started the livery stable.

**DP:** From Kansas.

**ZL:** Did D.G. Buck marry the daughter of your great-grandfather?

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**DP:** Yes, that was my mother. When D.G. came out, he first started farming and then he started a livery stable in Tempe. I also gave the Historical League some pictures of the livery stable.

**ZL:** Wonderful. When did your father's family arrive in the Valley?

**DP:** My father came out from Ohio in about 1900.

**ZL:** At what age?

**DP:** He was in his early 20s. He and his brother came out here. He was raised in Ohio. Everybody wanted to get out of Ohio in those days. The West was just getting the Roosevelt Dam and everybody was going to have all the water they needed; so they all flocked in here. My grandfather moved out in about 1890 and established farming in the Kyrene District. My great-grandfather was the first chairman of the Kyrene School Board. Dr. Wagner, who was principal down there, had a story on it. I was born in Tempe in 1912 in the Hackett House which still stands.

**ZL:** Your family lived in the Hackett House?

**DP:** Yes. We lived there for three years. That's what this log says at the Hackett House. I don't remember much of it, but I do remember the last few years. Then when I was six, we moved to Litchfield. My father was an electrician. He had charge of the pumps at the Litchfield ranch where the Southwest Cotton Company was in Goodyear. Then we moved to Marionette which was in Peoria. We stayed there and I was educated in the Peoria schools. I spent the summers in Tempe working for my grandfather.

**ZL:** What were you doing?

**DP:** I used to ride the gravel trucks, but they were not working much. Then he had a delivery service and I used to take a Model T pickup and go to Phoenix for Abram Jones and Tempe Hardware and all those people and pick up orders. People in those days didn't order big amounts of things; they just got what they needed for about a week. I did that during the summers so I saw Tempe grow quite a bit. Then after I got out of high school, I went to college at Flagstaff.

**ZL:** What was your major up there?

**DP:** Physical education and history. I spent three years, after I graduated, as freshman coach and assistant varsity coach for football. Then I moved down to Mesa after I was married, and started farming.



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**ZL:** According to the last alumni magazine from the University of Arizona, it lists you as a graduate in '34.

**DP:** I attended. I am a member of the class and I received some honors down there in the agriculture department.

**ZL:** Yes. Do you want to tell about your most recent one?

**DP:** For the most recent one, I was honored as the Agriculturist of the Year by the College of Agriculture. I have an honorary doctor's degree in Agriculture Science and I don't know straight up about science. I also received an honorary doctor's degree from Northern Arizona University in humanities. I have been working for the alumni quite a bit up there.

**ZL:** When did you receive that award from NAU?

**DP:** Probably in the late 70s. I'm not very good with dates. I got too many of them in my head.

**ZL:** After you graduated from NAU, you bought the College Inn in Flagstaff?

**DP:** Yes.

**ZL:** Where was that located?

**DP:** Right across from Campbell Hall, just barely off campus. That was kind of the hang out. A peculiar thing, they didn't allow the girls to smoke on campus in the dormitories; so this was a smoking den over there. Sometimes, those winter nights you opened the door, it looked like it was on fire the way the smoke came out of there.

**ZL:** Did you own that for an extended time period?

**DP:** About three years.

**ZL:** You were a referee for 25 years. Was that for football?

**DP:** Football and basketball.



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**ZL:** How did you manage that with your busy schedule?

**DP:** Well, most of the games were at night. I enjoyed football refereeing and also the basketball.

**ZL:** That was high school level?

**DP:** Yes, we only had two junior colleges in Arizona - Phoenix College and Eastern Arizona.

**ZL:** That was in the 50s and 60s. Twenty-five years, that went on for two plus decades. I read that you played semi-pro baseball and were a first baseman.

**DP:** Yeah, I'm not much of a player. It was just town teams mostly. In those days, every town had a team during the summertime. So I played on the Flagstaff team and I played on the Peoria team. But I wasn't that good.

**ZL:** But you enjoyed it?

**DP:** Oh yeah. I enjoyed all sports. I played all sports in high school and I was on the track team and played football at Northern Arizona. I wasn't in basketball. You couldn't do all of them anyway because they overlapped. But I enjoyed all sports, still do.

**ZL:** I'd like to talk some about cattle and sheep ranching.

**DP:** I was lucky. I was farming here on Baseline and my brother-in-law was adjacent to me. He was quite a big farmer and rancher.

**ZL:** This was Cliff Dobson?

**DP:** Cliff Dobson. He got a series of illnesses so I came in to help him and finally we just formed a partnership. He passed away a little over 20 years ago. He passed away just after we completed the sale to develop homes in this area. I'm still on the property. I live on Dobson Ranch Golf Course; it was part of my place. I have a home there. We've been living there on the ranch about 54 years. We'll be celebrating our 56th wedding anniversary on the 19th.

**ZL:** Wonderful.



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**DP:** Same gal. I don't know how she stood me.

**ZL:** It's amazing isn't it?

**DP:** Yeah. What they put up with, in the old days especially.

**ZL:** You were both in cattle and sheep and there were a lot of adversarial roles between those two groups.

**DP:** No, we were after that. The sheep men got along pretty good with the cattlemen. My brother-in-law and I both served on the Arizona Sheep Board and I've been a member of the Cattle Growers Association for a number of years; so they're compatible, nowadays especially. A lot of places in New Mexico run both cattle and sheep. Sheep business is getting pretty hard to do. There are not very many sheep men any more. Most of the sheep men were Basque people from Spain. They stayed in it when they came from there. They're in the second and third generation and those kids don't like that work. There's not that much money in it either.

**ZL:** In 1950, when you formed the Baseline Cattle Company with Cliff Dobson, you eventually bought three different ranches. One was near Seligman, one was down by Sasabe and one was out by Florence. Did you intend to spread out across the state or did those ranches just happen to be . . .

**DP:** Just happened to come. Cliff had a son who wanted to be a cowboy and be on a ranch so that's why we bought the ranch in the first place, in Seligman. We later sold that one and bought the one down at Sasabe; and then we got the one over at Florence. We usually got rid of one and then bought another.

**ZL:** You didn't own all three of those at once?

**DP:** We had two of them sometimes at one time. Now my nephew has the ranch down at Willcox. He partners with me in the land we have down around Chandler which we are disposing of, down to the airport and around there. He doesn't like farming, but he likes the cattle business.

**ZL:** His name is Jay Dobson?

**DP:** Jay Dobson. He was named after his father. Cliff's name was Henry Clifford Dobson so they just put him on Jay which was Junior I guess, and that stuck with him all the time.



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**ZL:** You had a feed lot business here.

**DP:** Yeah, we had one over on the Baseline. We fed quite a few cattle there. We had a feed mill also. It was the first Williamson mill that came into the state. It was a complete mill, manually operated and push button. We recently had a feed lot down in Chandler down by the airport; but I closed that up.

**ZL:** So you would bring the cattle in from the ranches to the feed lot?

**DP:** Yes and we'd also buy an awful lot of cattle - steers in the fall after roundups and you know how that was. That's the trouble with cattle ranching. You only get one payday a year.

**ZL:** Did you buy them yourself?

**DP:** Well, I did, but most of the time we had buyers out. I didn't order buyers. Cliff and I used to go out and pick them up. Also, Mr. John Dobson liked to do that.

**ZL:** That was your wife's father?

**DP:** Yes and Cliff's dad. He did that for a number of years, but then he retired and moved to Long Beach. The Dobson's had a great ranching history here and I was just lucky enough to be a part of it.

**ZL:** Do you know when they came to the Valley?

**DP:** John Dobson came in the early 90s and settled with his brother over on Baseline and homesteaded. He went back to Canada when he was 19 years old, and married his sweetheart. They farmed for a number of years in Saskatchewan, Western Canada. They moved here a little before the Roosevelt Dam was completed. They had three children in Canada. My wife and her younger brother, Earl, were the two that were born in Arizona. A lot of Canadians came down here in those days because Arizona, especially around Salt River Valley, had good water supply. We haven't suffered. It got a little dry in 1940. Everybody drilled wells.

Now the ground water has gone so far down, that wells are in big demand. But Roosevelt Dam has been a great thing along with all the other dams. Then they dammed the Verde with two dams; so Arizona, around Maricopa County and the Salt River Project, is really not going to suffer for water. There is some for farming and into housing. I think we're in pretty good shape.

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**ZL:** So you see the future as very optimistic?

**DP:** I think so. When you see what's happening in California and other states: overpopulation and some droughts are hurting them. I just saw in the paper this morning that the biggest influx of immigrants is coming from Illinois to Arizona. Midwestern and northwestern people up around the Great Lakes like this weather down here. If they can get out of it, they're going to get here. We found that out with the Cubs.

**ZL:** Would you talk a little bit about the Heber/Reno Trail? I was reading in a book, *America's Sheep Trails*, about the trail between the White Mountains and the Salt River Valley. Do you know when that trail opened?

**DP:** I can't tell you when it opened, but it was in the early days and they set two trails up from the Valley; one was called Heber/Reno and the other one Flagstaff/Williams.

**ZL:** And did that one have a particular name, the Flagstaff/Williams trail?

**DP:** No. I don't think so. They called it Cordes because it went past Cordes Junction. But that went north of Phoenix just like about the Black Canyon Highway and up to Cordes. Then it split off and went up into the Verde Valley and across the Verde River. One trail went to Flagstaff and the other one went to Williams. There were quite a few sheep from the west side that moved up there. At one time when we were in the business, there were 38 bands went on the Heber/Reno Trail. Now there are only two bands that go on the trail and those are the two that my nephew owns.

**ZL:** From 38 down to two and a band is 2,000 sheep?

**DP:** A band is about 2,000 that they run on the trail. So you can see what's happened to the sheep. But this Heber/Reno Trail started out here across the Salt River east of Mesa and went up past Sunflower, up over into Tonto Basin just north of Four Peaks and then went from Tonto Basin into the Sierra Ancha Mountains and came out at Young, Arizona. Then from Young it went up on the rim west of Heber. Some of them stopped there and some of them went on further. We went the furthest. We went past Dry Lake, Snowflake, and east of Show Low and just about to the Indian Reservation by McNary; then we went east. We were the longest of any of them.

**ZL:** Do you know how many miles?

**DP:** We went by days and weeks. We traveled three to five miles a day on most of them. During the



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morning and evening, we would graze them; just keep them headed in the right direction. Then around noon they shaded up and rested. Then they would get up on their own and start out. The herder was there to keep them started the right way. A lot of those sheep knew where they were going. It took us six weeks to go up. We left here the middle of April and got up to the forest range there. We had some patented land, but we all got on the forest right where Sunrise is. We went from there to Greer. We got on there the first of July and we got off the middle of August. So we weren't there too long. The main purpose of that was just the climate and put the top bucks in. We bred them up there. The trail is really what made it good because you spent over three months on the trail. The trail was dedicated; some of the waters were owned by the sheep owners, the Association. It was all patented land there and of course, I had rights on the forest for the trail. It is very interesting. In the old days, you didn't need them like you do nowadays. You would meet them every two or three days except when they got to Tonto Basin and on up to Young. That's a pretty stiff climb and there were no roads up there, so they carried supplies. The sheep herders were Basque and we brought them in. We had an agreement with the Spanish government but later it got too hard, so now they're using Mexicans.

**ZL:** Don't they use some Central Americans also?

**DP:** Yeah, they had some Peruvians or something around here. We never had one of those, but those guys, they're too little. They're used to loading those llamas instead of a burro and they're kind of short. They really didn't work out. The Basque were really the ones, but then they're smart. They got up here and saw all of these people working in the dairies and around town; so when their time was up, they didn't want to sign up again. They wanted to work somewhere else where they had television and everything else and bars. But those Basques - they're working sons-of-a-gun. The old timers were great, the fathers and grandfathers.

**ZL:** Can you tell me about the Blue Point Sheep Bridge?

**DP:** The Blue Point Sheep Bridge washed out in 1920, so they replaced it. It was a narrow bridge. It was a pretty tight squeeze for the burros with packs on, but it was narrow and that's where they counted them on the forests and also that was the trail. Later on, they put a highway bridge that goes up to Stuart Mountain Dam. It went out when we were still in the business and so then we used the Stuart Mountain Bridge to go to Stuart Mountain Dam. It comes down right close to it and they would block it off so we could get across. You see those sheep, when they hit the other side of that river know where they're going and they all go to jumping and swimming; the same way when they're coming down this way. But the reason it takes seven weeks to come down and only six weeks to go up is we have to give them an extra week because they're getting heavy with lamb. They breed them up there. It's hotter here in September so we don't want to get in

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here too quick.

**ZL:** It's still plenty hot in September. The Hohokam Organization in Mesa has been responsible for many innovative and forward looking projects. Would you talk about the organization and when it started?

**DP:** The Chamber of Commerce in Mesa decided that it would be nice to have a team train in Mesa. We had one in Phoenix and one in Tucson.

**ZL:** Who were they at the time?

**DP:** They were the New York Giants and the Cleveland Indians. So we were lucky enough to secure, in 1950, the Chicago Cubs. Mr. Wrigley decided he wanted to move out of Catalina Island which is no place to spring train; so we made a contact. I was chairman of the Chamber Committee. We made a contact with them and we got the Cubs in here. They were here for about 18 years. Then they got an offer from California around San Diego, Escondido, and so they took that. But they didn't do anything. They went over there one year and came back.

In the meantime, we made a deal with Charlie Finley and the Oakland ball club. They were moving from Kansas City to Oakland then. So we had Charlie Finley and the Oakland club out there. They had the good teams then. They won three World Series while they were in Mesa and won several league titles.

But we always wanted the Cubs because they had a following and they still have a following. The Cubs have been back here now for 15 years and we built them the stadium from nothing to about 9,000 seats. When they first came out here, it was just the Cubs ball club, not even an office man; a traveling secretary and the coaches - that was it. Now they come out here and use the facility year round. They have their minor leagues here and we get over 250 players that come in. So it's big with all the office people. This is the headquarters for the minor leagues. Some of these minors, they just don't have any business in Chicago until they get to the majors. So it's really worked out well for us. And the Cubs draw. I don't know why. They can't win, but they draw.

**ZL:** Their fans are very loyal.

**DP:** Oh yeah. It's an organization deal. Here's one thing, I just picked out some things. This is an article from the *Arizona Republic* on Diamond Mission and Mr. Cubs names Cactus Team from 1989. Pioneer brought spring baseball to Mesa and the Valley.



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**DP:** These are just some clippings I found about baseball, Little League and the whole thing; so I'll let you take those and see what you want to do with them.

**ZL:** We would love to have them. That would be wonderful. You were a member of the Hohokam Organization that brought Little League to Mesa in the early 1950's. Do you remember how many teams there were when it started?

**DP:** We had four. Now with Little League, Pony League and what we call the Pee Wee's, the young ones that bat off the tees, there's over 14,000 kids playing in Mesa. We had four teams and the Hohokam for the managers. Coaches and umpires did everything, but we only had four teams. They were sponsored by four of the different service clubs in town. They got too big for us so we had to get together with the parents and let them run it. It's a great program. It's, of course, a great program all over this country.

**ZL:** There have been some negative articles in the last couple of years on Little League. Do you think it's changed since it started?

**DP:** Yeah, it's changed. There's too much parent involvement. Now the parents get in there with kids doing this and their children doing that and they're fighting with the umpires and everything else. And I think it was wrong to bring in the Asia teams because they were cheating on their age, like the Filipinos. Their kids matured faster than our kids anyway. It has gotten out of hand. There's too much pressure put on the kids now to win. We had pressure; everybody likes to win. We went to California two or three times for different tournaments working our way up. They're still doing a good job, but there is still too much backbiting and bitterness.

**ZL:** In the interview for the Phoenix History Project that you did with Karen Ullman, you talked about the professional baseball teams in Mesa, Phoenix, Miami and Globe. Do you remember what year that was in?

**DP:** That was in the 20s. I can remember they had a team in Mesa called the Mesa Jewels and my grandparents would drive over from Tempe to Mesa to watch them play out at old Rendezvous Park. They had a couple of ball players in Mesa that were from Tempe playing on the team here so they had to do it. That was about all the fun they had in Miami and Globe. Bisbee had a good team. Roy Johnson was down there for a long time He later came in and was coach with the Cubs here for a number of years. Then the teams went out of the state. Finally they went to El Paso, Juarez and they just grew really. In the old days, it was good for the mining camps. I saw the first spring training game in Phoenix in 1929. The Detroit Tigers came out. They didn't have anybody to play so they played the local people. That was when they had Charlie Gehringer and Mickey Cochrane and some of those great names. But they only stayed one

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year. There wasn't anybody to play them. It wasn't organized like it is now. Some of them would go to Biloxi, Mississippi, some to Florida, some in Indiana and some resort places. The Cubs were staying at Catalina. There were quite a number of teams in California then. They traveled by train. On the way back, they traveled at night and stopped and played a game with another team. So it took them about ten days to get home. They weren't in Arizona or California that long. It's developed into a big business now, big business. I liked it when it was small; too much demand on it now. The first year, we drew 12,000 people for the season. This last year, we drew 140,000 people. So you see, you've got to have bigger stadiums and a lot of service. But it's fun anyway.

**ZL:** You served On the Federal Land Bank Board for 25 years at least, maybe longer.

**DP:** I think maybe at least. That was an agency that loaned mortgage money to the farmers and ranchers. Later we took over the whole state. At first, we were just Maricopa County. Then later the others came in. They're still in business; it's the Federal Land Bank.

**ZL:** That probably provided a great service to farmers and ranchers.

**DP:** Oh yes. It was great. The interest was low and it was a great service.

**ZL:** The land that you and Dobson ranched is now Dobson Ranch and Desert Samaritan Hospital and Mesa Community College. Is that right?

**DP:** Yes.

**ZL:** How far did the ranch extend?

**DP:** The northern boundaries went a quarter of a mile north of Southern Avenue from Dobson to Alma School. Then we had this section where the junior college is and that was Alma School to Baseline. Then where the Samaritan Hospital is, is another piece of it. This is part of it here. It went south to Guadalupe. Actually, we had some over in Tempe beyond the canal. We extended about from Baseline on the South side probably four miles. It was easy to farm because there wasn't that much traffic and most of the roads were dirt. We could put cattle on the road to move them; now you can't. When we first started, we used to drive cattle to Tempe to the stockyards.

**ZL:** Where were they located?



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**DP:** They were located west of McClintock between McClintock and Rural on the south side of the railroad tracks, north of Broadway. That was the Tempe stockyard where they shipped for years and years. In those days, everything was brought in by train. Then the trucks came in later on. When it first started out, everything went to California by train. We sold them to market over in Los Angeles. Saturday we'd drive three or four car loads over to the stockyards and load them up in the afternoon. They'd be there Sunday for the Monday market. That was the ritual. As long as it was the cattle run feed lot, that's where they had to go to get butchered.

**ZL:** You were involved in starting Mesa Country Club. What year did you start working on that?

**DP:** They celebrated their 25th anniversary a couple of years ago. I was on the Board of Director's Committee and I was in charge of construction of the golf course range; used some of my own help. We didn't have architects in those days like we do now. We just used the farm machinery to build the greens and things like that.

**ZL:** Someone told me the other day that was on a landfill.

**DP:** Part of it was. It was not a landfill because it was kind of where they put the junk in those days. It wasn't irrigated. Where the clubhouse is now, was part of the Salt River Project. There was a little airport there and that's where the old canals were. The Hohokam Canals came through there and it was not very good soil; so that was never taken into the Salt River Project. The part down below the hill was, but that part wasn't. We had to move junk and bury it but it wasn't like it is nowadays - cans and stuff. They weren't even making car bodies in those days. It was a big job. We drilled a well, 300 feet; it finally went dry; So we had to go into the city. Now we're getting our water from the Salt River Project and we have a well right down there, so it's in real great shape for water. You did your homework.

**ZL:** You served ten years on the Mesa School District board. When you began serving, there were five separate districts in Mesa. One superintendent, Harvey Taylor, was instrumental in consolidating the multiple districts into one district. Do you know what year that took place?

**DP:** I can't tell you the year.

**ZL:** The decade.

**DP:** It would be in the late 40s. I went on the board just after it had been done. Cliff was on the board. We had Jordan School, Alma School, Mesa School, Lehi School and then Mesa High School. They finally



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consolidated into one board and one superintendent. It was one of the first districts to consolidate like this in Arizona, and it set a trend. It was really a lifesaver. It's a good setup. What happened was they had different tax breaks. We had a little school down here on the corner of Baseline and Dobson and the tax rate was a nickel a hundred, and Lehi was \$2.40 a hundred. It was Cliff and some of the others around here who had the land and saw the need for consolidating. Our kids were going to Alma School and they weren't paying. We just hauled them over there in those days. That's why we consolidated. Cliff was behind that.

**ZL:** So when you went on, they had already consolidated?

**DP:** They had already done it. That's how he ended up on the board.

**ZL:** Was there a lot of controversy? Do you remember if there was?

**DP:** Not that much. Harvey Taylor pretty much had everybody in his hip pocket. We were a strong Mormon community in those days and there were Mormons from all the districts except there weren't many here. There was Lehi and Alma School and Mesa so it was really Harvey Taylor that got it done. I don't know if anybody else could've. There was no jealousy in the district.

**ZL:** There wasn't from one to the other?

**DP:** No, it was really a smooth operation. No controversy at all.

**ZL:** That's interesting. Do you know how they consolidated the various boards?

**DP:** They took one from each board. That's how they got the five.

**ZL:** So each board had to select their candidate?

**DP:** Yes, that made it good.

**ZL:** You served as President of the Arizona School Board Association. Do you know what year that was?

**DP:** It was about 30 years ago or so. I think I might have been the fifth president after they were organized.

**ZL:** And each one served one year, or a couple of years?

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**DP:** A couple of years. But some of them served more than that. I served two years. You might know who the treasurer was for us at that time, Mrs. Kolbe. They had a ranch down in Patagonia. Kolbe is now in the House of Representatives.

**ZL:** Oh, Jim Kolbe.

**DP:** And John, the newspaperman. Mrs. Kolbe lived over here in Friendship Village in Tempe. But Dr. Ed Sechrist from Tucson was the push. A lot of that was from Tucson and Southern Arizona. Dr. Sechrist from Flagstaff served as president at one time. They weren't any relation and they didn't even spell their names the same, but they just happened to be doctors. It's a pretty strong organization now.

**ZL:** Did that group set policy?

**DP:** No. We just tried to do a little lobbying to get . . . We had no funds to operate the board, just to get everybody on the same side of the street, operating the same. Some of the big districts didn't come in for quite awhile. Our guys weren't too enthusiastic about it here in Mesa. But it's strong in Mesa now. They've done a great, great job. It's really a lobbying thing because that's the main purpose of it, or main thrust.

**ZL:** So did you actually go lobby?

**DP:** Oh, yes. Not the same as others were because senators and representatives come from all over the state. They've got school districts wherever they come from. That's really how it happens.

**ZL:** Then we come to the Community Colleges. You served three five-year terms on the Maricopa County Junior College Board.

**DP:** Yeah, I think that's one of the greatest things we've ever done. It opened up so many avenues for kids to go to college. Community College is about half academic and half vocational. Every kid doesn't need to go to four year school. When they get out of high school, kids are kind of loose. They don't know where to go and Community College is a great tool and it's cheap. We've got Maricopa County now that has over 80,000 students. The average is darn near 30 years old. It's people wanting to change and people wanting to upgrade their life-style; or some of them just go in there because they want to learn something. It's a great thing. I don't know how the universities could have survived, or what they would have done. We had a little problem with the universities when we first organized. Tucson was real reluctant to come in. Flagstaff was the first one that really helped us out, Dr. Walkup. They were tough on our credits, transfers



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and stuff like that. Now they have a representative from the Board of Regents on the state Junior College Board. They're all now whistling the same tune pretty much. There's jealousy of course. You see, the ASU West Campus has no freshman and sophomore classes. They're seniors and juniors. I see some people trying to get them to take in . . . there's plenty of junior colleges out there to take care of them. That's a great move.

**ZL:** I think I read that when you were on the Board, you purchased Phoenix College.

**DP:** The legislature enacted a law that gave counties the right to purchase the junior college from Phoenix. It was being run by Phoenix Union High School District and it kind of out-grew them. The same was true down at Graham County, which was financing most of the one down at Safford. It just opened it up so they could get some state funds.

**ZL:** So Phoenix Union ran Phoenix College as a junior college?

**DP:** Yes. It had no chance to grow. Kids from other districts had to pay tuition to go in and they could only take so many. We established that one and they moved them out there on Thomas Road because they were crowded over on Seventh. They just had one building over by Phoenix Union High School. Glendale, Mesa, and Scottsdale were the three other original ones that were brought in early.

**ZL:** So when you were on the Board, you purchased the land for those three campuses?

**DP:** Yes. We didn't for Scottsdale. We rented Indian land. We had a contract with the Indians. It's all Indian Salt River Reservation. We had a 99 year lease with the Indians for that. They will probably renew it, but that was a very good lease. To start out with, we were just like in agriculture, paying that much. Then it escalated as we grew. Owning the land and the deal we've got is pretty reasonable for a junior college. There's no place in Scottsdale to get that much land down in that part of Scottsdale.

I like your questions. It makes it a lot easier for me.

**ZL:** Thank you. I read that you were elected to three five-year terms on the Community College Board despite challenges from rivals who claimed that you gave too much emphasis to athletics. How do you respond to that charge?

**DP:** I don't think I gave too much. They were amateurs. We didn't recruit, and I think the only complaint was coming from a group in Scottsdale. They had a bunch of complaints; but they probably shouldn't have



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started over there. They weren't ready for it. That's just like water on a duck's back with me. I'm not strong on athletics. They have to live up to the same rules, but the kids got a chance to go to school and also to get a scholarship offer. A lot of out of state students go to big hot colleges' right out of junior college. Of course, ASU and UofA have profited by it a great deal. I don't think we're getting too much athletics. It kind of upsets me to see that 22 boys were playing football 40 years ago with two coaches. Now you've got 15 coaches for 22 boys. That's the only thing.

**ZL:** A little top heavy?

**DP:** Yeah, I think so. They're stressing it too much. But it's money. That's what supports the universities. Look what it's done for ASU. Look what it's done for Notre Dame. That's the way you get the alumni to divvy up too.

**ZL:** You served on the Board of Regents for seven years. Do you remember what year you were named to the board?

**DP:** It was the year Castro was governor.

**ZL:** You were president of the board some of the time.

**DP:** Yes, each person gets to serve one term as president. So when I was not president, I was chairman of the committee, appointed by Sid Woods who was president at that time, to investigate the possibility of joining the Pac 10. That raised a controversy, but in our committee's view of it, we were joining with some of the great universities. We joined with USC, Stanford, and Berkeley. I think there were five universities, probably five of the top 20 with research money. So we joined the big league in academics and football. And we had a problem.

**ZL:** Who was resisting?

**DP:** The University of California, Stanford, UCLA, USC, Oregon, Oregon State, Washington and Washington State were the eight; and we came in and that made ten. Some, like Oregon, were thinking we were going to dilute the money coming out of the Rose Bowl. That's what they lived on. The Rose Bowl is divided up equally. The team that plays gets the expenses. But then all the rest of the money left over is divided equally among the other schools. When we came in, Arizona and Arizona State were the top draws. We still are right at the top in attendance. Even UCLA had problems. They had to move out to Pasadena and they have a bad team. But Arizona supports their teams real good. I'll never forget Frank



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Kush was really teed off because he was winning all the WAC games (Western Athletic Conference) and he said to me, “What are you trying to do, get me fired?” I said, “Why, Frank?” He said, “Oh we're doing good in the WAC.” I said, “Well, if you don't do good in the Pac 10, you might not get fired. You might be around and might not. It's a challenge.” It was a great move academically.

**ZL:** Did most of the members on the board want to do that?

**DP:** Yeah, we had no problem with that. It came along. It was pretty well thought . . .

**ZL:** Your resistance was from the other schools.

**DP:** Yeah, but only two complainers really, Oregon and Washington. President Hubbard at the time was the president of USC. So he threatened (this is just on the side) he threatened that if they didn't take in Arizona and Arizona State, USC was going to get out of the Pac 8 and was going to take the Rose Bowl with them. So that woke them up. That's something that nobody knows. They don't advertise that. But Hubbard was really pulling for us.

**ZL:** He must have been. That was a strong statement.

**DP:** And Dr. Schafer was strong for it too.

**ZL:** Dr. Schafer was the UofA president at the time?

**DP:** Yes, at the time. He was president when I went on. Then we hired Dr. Koffler.

**ZL:** While you were a regent, ASU turned their experimental farm into a research park.

**DP:** Yeah, that's because of the problems with Arizona State; but that land was given by a group of farmers. In fact, I happened to be one of them. We bought that half section for a college of agriculture because in those days, this was kind of the center. Then UofA was a Land Grant college and that was duplication. They weren't doing as good a job at the district experimental farm as they were at the UofA so I thought, and I happened to be the chairman of that committee. A lot of people in Tempe didn't like me for it, but we put that in so it would go into land to be used for research development. Of course, at that time, everybody wanted to get a research grant. Stanford University had a big one and a lot of them had it and it just didn't work out because money was scarce after that. But the research park is a great thing and it's going to be there forever. Otherwise it would have probably been sold for housing. The land where that is,

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is worth something, just for the convenience. The land will be around, and money is going to be better after this year.

**ZL:** So you still feel that that was the right thing to do?

**DP:** It was a great move but I think that the people that had their jobs change didn't like it. But Rudy Campbell was on the board and he couldn't vote for it. He was kind of adamant; but he realized a good thing. Bill Payne was on the board at that same time and neither one of them voted for it.

**ZL:** These are both strong Tempe residents?

**DP:** Yeah. Of course, Rudy is from Tempe, but he never did go to school there. Bill graduated from ASU.

**ZL:** When Ernest McFarland ran for governor which must have been in '54, you were his campaign manager. What can you tell me about that?

**DP:** Well, I've never seen a guy with as much energy in my life. It was an old fashioned campaign. It didn't have all these fancy television ads and that kind of stuff. It wasn't that much of a job really for me because we just raised a little money. I went out campaigning with him. I went to Flagstaff with him one time. He wore me out. He went up and down every street and business house in town shaking hands with everybody. He was an old time politician. He did a good job, but then he wanted to run for Senate again and that was a mistake. The next year he was in there and Barry beat him; so he shouldn't have done that. He could have been the governor forever. He was a great man. Ernest McFarland was a great man. Being a campaign manager wasn't that much problem in those days.

**ZL:** Did you travel by car in those days or did he have a little plane?

**DP:** Oh no, just all car. He ended up with that Channel 3 radio station with his family; his daughter. He had one daughter. She and her husband have the station now and it's very successful, very successful. Ernest McFarland was a smart man, a smart man.

**ZL:** How much of your time did you spend raising money?

**DP:** Not that much. It was different than it is now. You didn't get the big money. *Arizona Republic* put a man up to run against him. Of course, he got all the local news. He was a good man, Horace Griffin, I knew him very well. He was an old time friend of mine. But he happened to be a Democrat and I guess



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that's the way it was. I'm not a real strong Democrat. I've been a Democrat all my life, but the first time I voted was when Roosevelt ran the first time. I was in Flagstaff in those days. There are good people in both parties. Where'd you get all these questions?

**ZL:** I did a lot of research.

**DP:** You sure did.

**ZL:** I was going to say you must be a Democrat because you were McFarland's campaign manager and then you were appointed to the Board of Regents by Castro.

**DP:** Castro went to school in Flagstaff. I had him as a freshman football player. Then, of course, he was a little light for the varsity so he just started boxing. We were in the Border Conference in those days and he was a Border Conference lightweight champion. I followed Castro's career all the time. At that time, we made a pretty good sweep. We got Bruce Babbitt as Attorney General; we got Wes Bolin as Secretary of State and Carolyn Warner as Superintendent of Public Instruction. That was Williams, but it wasn't Jack Williams. It was another Williams that Castro beat. When that Williams came out of Indiana, he was in the gas business out here. I can't think of his first name. He was in the Senate. He wasn't that strong. But we were lucky. Castro, that's something: a Mexican who was a naturalized citizen. He was raised in Mexico out of a big family. I think that was quite a stroke. And later he got some good appointments as an ambassador, both in Bolivia and to Argentina.

**ZL:** You've seen Arizona turn from a Democratic state to a Republican state.

**DP:** Yeah. I've seen it, and the change was good. We've had some good ones. No party's got the lock on the bad ones or the good ones either; I've liked the change. I voted for probably more Republicans than I have Democrats. Just because they're Democrats doesn't mean that much to me. I mainly vote for the person. I spent the first two terms with John Rhodes as his financial officer. So I told him I better get out because I'm a Democrat and he was going to get in trouble pretty soon. But that was kind of an upset when he won the first term. He was a local guy, a lawyer in Mesa who came out here to Williams Field and then he just stayed.

**ZL:** You must have had excellent management skills because you had so many activities going on at the same time.

**DP:** I don't know. I don't know whether they're excellent, but we got through them anyway.

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**ZL:** Do you have anything to say to young people today about managing their time and energies?

**DP:** I'll say one thing. It's good to have something on the outside to do; but you've got to get your business done first. I pretty well have taken care of that. I don't go out as much as I used to; I've been involved in a lot of things that nowadays I wouldn't think of. I think that if you're going to live here, you'd better contribute something.

**ZL:** In 1974, the Emprise Corporation which operated several dog tracks in Arizona was convicted of conspiring with known racketeers. The state needed somebody to take over the track's operations and you were appointed by the Arizona Racing Commission to serve as trustee for Emprise's racing and concession interests in the state. What did that involve and how long did you serve as trustee?

**DP:** I served a little over a year. All I did was when they made some deals, I had to pass on them. I had to check and see how much money they were taking out. It really wasn't that involved. It was kind of a political thing. Jack Williams was the governor at that time and the Racing Commission asked me. The Racing Commission wasn't going to give Empire a license. They made me the trustee because they wanted to keep their dog races going; so the Racing Commission insisted that they appoint a trustee. I had my own accountant and my lawyer and it didn't amount to that much. Emprise is a big outfit, you know. It's a Delaware corporation. They're concessionaires really. One is the forest service which has a concession for the athletic training camp here at the Phoenix ball park. Somebody had gotten involved in Las Vega: one of their board or something. But it never turned out to be anything.

**ZL:** So then after the time that you served as trustee, what happened? It went back to Emprise?

**DP:** Yeah, the Racing Commission gave them a license. I think it was just kind of a bluff to satisfy the press or something.

**ZL:** You also raced thoroughbreds at Turf Paradise.

**DP:** Yeah, I've had a few horses. I've just got some brood mares now, but I had a few horses.

**ZL:** Did you enjoy that?

**DP:** I enjoyed it. It was a challenge. I had a horse with Jack Finley and we won a race at the old fair grounds, I think it was in the 50s or something, I don't know when the fairground was running but it had to



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be 30 or 40 years ago. Frank Calford, a lion hunter and a great cowboy, was the trainer. I've had a few horses and it was enjoyable. It was good but mostly bad.

**ZL:** It appears to me that even if you're 80 years old, you're certainly not fully retired. What keeps you so motivated and involved?

**DP:** Well actually one thing is we've got a lot of things going that are good. I don't get too involved with them, but we've got the Chicago Cubs here. I've been with that, trying to get some more teams in here. We've got that pretty well solved now with the new tax on rental cars that will raise some money for the counties to help share. We built all this stuff in Mesa. The Hohokams borrowed the money and built it all. It's all on city property. The city owns it. So we built this out of just the profits we've made over the 40 years or so. We're always behind. But we made a good deal with the Cubs and we got it worked out so we'll pay out. We won't make any money, but we had a lot of fun and did a lot of good for the community.

**ZL:** Definitely.

**DP:** Because the Cubs really are the bell-weather. Now then, these other teams are coming. We built our facilities; now these others are coming in and they're getting fine facilities and only paying one-third of it. We paid the whole ball of wax. The county's going to take two-thirds. But that's good. We needed that to keep Florida from getting it. We were scared at one time and we got Florida. We've got eight teams. That's probably all we need; one in Tucson and of course, Yuma is going to lose theirs. They're going to move to Peoria, but that's no fault of Yuma; it's just isolated and too far away. We got nobody for their minor leagues to play down there. Actually, this is getting to be an awful big business when you see what kind of salaries they pay. It's a great sport.

**ZL:** You still maintain an office at Dobson Ranch. How many hours a week do you spend here and what kind of projects are you involved in?

**DP:** None. Well actually I own the property here and I just got a place to hang around. I've been sent home too much and that's not too good. It's a good place to hang out. I just come over in the mornings a little bit and in the afternoons. Phil Kellis is our manager here, so I'm just around to front and have a place to hang my hat.

**ZL:** Would you share some of the rewards and frustrations of retirement?

**DP:** Well I don't think I'm retired. I haven't accepted it yet. We farmed up until- this is the second year we



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haven't farmed. I had the feed lot, and we've still got that land to dispose of and I'm involved in that. I don't think I'm retired.

**ZL:** You're too busy to be retired.

**DP:** Just too many projects yet to go.

**ZL:** As you look back over your life, what do you think are the biggest changes that have occurred?

**DP:** Actually the biggest change is the automobile. It's changed the world more, especially in Arizona. In horse and buggy days you didn't get around too good. Now, people can come in and get out of here. I think that's the number one thing: modernization. Then they got in the machinery. It used to be you got a nice tractor for \$20,000, then \$30,000, now you get a tractor for \$100,000. But the reason they do it is because it's so much nicer than the one you were driving back here when you had to crank it by hand. We're paying for those goodies; same with automobiles. But that makes a life-style.

**ZL:** You've been such a futurist. What do you think are the most acute economic issues today and what will drive Arizona's economy in the future?

**DP:** Taxes are the worst thing we have going. I think there's a lot of waste in taxes. They've tightened up now; but they've been wasted. Just like this national budget. It's been ridiculous what they've done with that. That's been our big problem. If people can hang onto what they got now, we're all right. You can see the governments are tightening their belt. But I served several years on the Samaritan Health Board and that thing has gotten clear out of hand. Health costs are going up because people are demanding too much. How many of these people could come in here 20 years ago and get the full service? They're taking advantage of it. The worst thing that started that was when these companies came out and gave workers 100% coverage for health insurance. People just started abusing it then. It all started out that they had to pay the first \$25 or something. Some of them couldn't probably, but they used to take their kids into the emergency room instead of taking them to the doctor because the company would pay for it. That's where it really got out of hand. The companies were fighting for employees, trying to keep them. I think Arizona's future is better than any state, really. We've got the climate. We're going to get the retirees and most of them have money to take care of themselves. Our water situation in Maricopa County, especially in the Salt River Project area, isn't a problem. They talk about soaking the golf courses with effluent. They're going to run out of golf courses pretty soon. The effluent is something you're going to have and you're going to get more of it all the time. So you've got to keep building golf courses where you can use the effluent. I served on the board of the Colorado River Project for a couple of terms when they first



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started. That's just really gotten to be a boondoggle now. When that started out, it was great. Now they're getting too many things attached to it. Environmentalists are killing us. They don't want to smoke or they don't want this or that, yet they smoke like hell in the home and the office. But I think Arizona's future is great, better than any other state.

**ZL:** What do you think will happen with the Central Arizona Project?

**DP:** They'll have to keep it. I think that is what's going to happen. A lot of that water is going to the Indians and they're not paying on any of the expenses. So the Indians are going to have to start doing something with their water. They've got that water and they're going to sell it to the farmers. The farmers can't buy it because it's going to be too high. So the Indians are going to have to do a little something with it. And the cost, environmental cost, is what's killing a lot of things. I can't believe they gave the authority for these environmentalists. They can shut down a road project or anything else. And they'll do it. They're son of a guns, a bunch of nuts, most of them.

**ZL:** Can you remember any of the attitudes you had in your youth that changed as you matured?

**DP:** I can't recall anything I think that changed. I was always kind of gung ho. Took things as they came. First job I got when I got out of college was during tough times. Before I went back to the University, I got a job at Nogales for the Highway Department. We were surveying a road from Nogales to Patagonia and my roommate was John Lentz. John Lentz graduated from the University as an engineer. He went to Phelps Dodge after that and became the President of Phelps Dodge. It's just being in the right place. I enjoyed that job. It didn't last too long. It was just for the summer and I went back to college in the fall, but I enjoyed it. Living in Nogales in those days, you could go across the line and eat for fifty cents. But I've enjoyed everything. I can't think of anything that's been real distasteful for me.

**ZL:** As a native of Arizona, what do you think are some of the strongest points of the state?

**DP:** I think the way they set up the counties when they organized the state. The counties are set up so that they run themselves. They probably need a little more leeway because the legislature makes a law but they don't tell you how you're going to pay for it. But I think we've had pretty good government in Arizona as compared to what you'd expect somewhere else. I think they set up our Constitution when they had the first go-around and I think it has worked out very well. There has been a lot of jealousy between the University and ASU mainly. Tucson got the university after their legislators were told to be sure and come back with the insane asylum. They got the University instead so they were mad; and look at what it is now. The insane asylum in those days was big business. Now you hardly know where it is. I think that our

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statehood has done pretty well. Goldwater was a good senator representing Arizona. Our governors have been honest, some of them not too smart, but they've been honest. I don't want to criticize anybody. There's really nobody that ought to be hung.

**ZL:** Can you think of any other parts of your life that you would like to talk about on this tape?

**DP:** We haven't talked about my family. I've got one daughter and three granddaughters. Then I have three great-grandchildren: two boys and a girl.

**ZL:** Now your daughter's name is . . .

**DP:** Ann Schwater. She's married and lives in Mesa. My three granddaughters-- all of them have gone to college. One of them is now studying to be a technician in the hospital where they give tests and X-rays. She just eats it up. One is a nurse who lives in Kentucky; married a doctor there. The other one lives here in Mesa and has three children. She is working at the University of Phoenix. Having the kids around is worth a lot. I had one brother. He passed away about 25 years ago. That's about the size of it.

**ZL:** I think I forgot to say in there, you married Ruby Dobson.

**DP:** Yes. She was the youngest daughter of John Dobson.

**ZL:** Was she going to school at Flagstaff also?

**DP:** She was going to summer school and at that time, I was still in college and was working at the cafeteria. I was a pot galloper, assistant to the cook. There's a funny little thing to tell you. The cook in the cafeteria got sick, so they brought in a colored lady. When she came in I said, "Mary, I'm the king of the pots: a white king and a black Queen." You couldn't say that now. I'm a feller with the colored people. I don't like what some of them are doing, but our colored people are here. We only had one colored person at the college when I was up there. No colored football players. The one colored student ended up being the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the state of California. They just need a chance. There are lots of Spanish kids up there. In fact, when I was at Marionette in the third grade we had three teachers. That was a Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company area. Pima Cotton was used in tires before they brought in nylon; so that was big business. We had 150 some odd kids and 150 of them were Mexicans. I think about five or six white kids were in those three grades. So I've been tolerant of blacks. I really like the Mexicans. We use a lot of Mexicans on the farm. Not wetbacks; some have been born here and some came legally. But we always used Mexicans; got along with them good. Cliff spoke Spanish as well as the Mexicans

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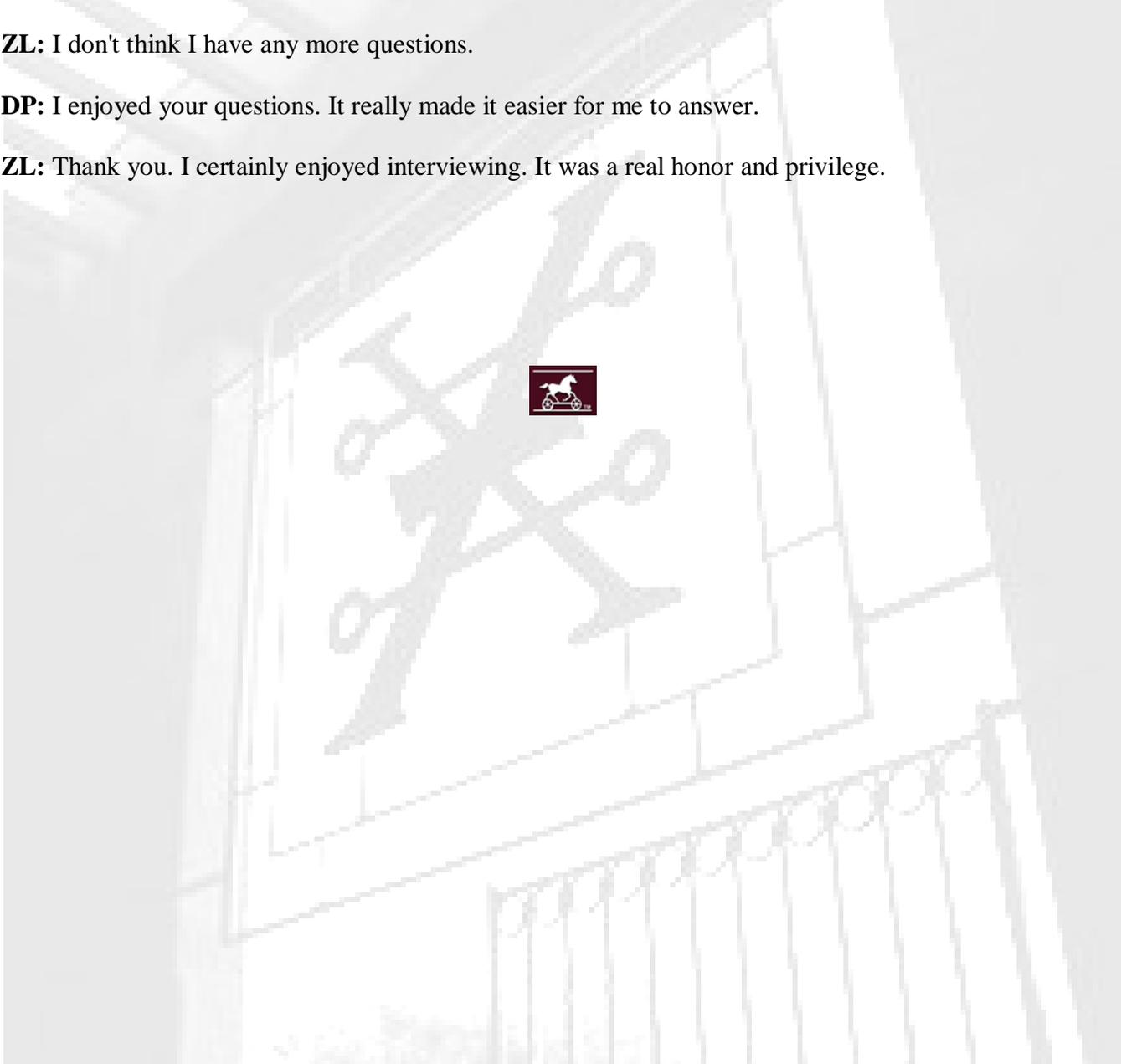
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mostly. I butchered it a little bit, but I got by with it. I'm tolerant of the minorities. What else have you got?

**ZL:** I don't think I have any more questions.

**DP:** I enjoyed your questions. It really made it easier for me to answer.

**ZL:** Thank you. I certainly enjoyed interviewing. It was a real honor and privilege.



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