



ROBERT W. GOLDWATER, SR.
1910 – 2006

Honored as a Historymaker 1992
Businessman, Civic Leader
Father of the Phoenix Open



The following is an oral history interview with Robert W. Goldwater (**RG**) conducted by Karin Ullmann (**KU**) for the Phoenix History Project on July 27, 1976 at his office at the Goldmar Building, 2920 North 7th Street, Phoenix, Arizona.

Transcripts for website edited by members of Historical League, Inc.

Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Heritage Center Archives, an Historical Society Museum, Tempe, Arizona.

KU: Mr. Goldwater, when did your family first come to Phoenix, and do you know why they came?

RG: To go back a little bit, my grandfather built a store on the Colorado River, on the Arizona side in 1860. He moved over here from Los Angeles because he felt that he could better service the forts that were here to fight the Indians. They brought their good and things around Baja, California and up through the Gulf and up the Colorado River. It was cheaper to do that than bring it overland. In 1860, he thought there was a better market on that river than there was in Los Angeles. Los Angeles is fairly new too, as you know.

Then about 1880, my Uncle Morris and my father and grandfather moved the store to Prescott, Arizona. In about 1882, they decided to try a branch store here in Phoenix and that didn't work out too well, but they kept the one in Prescott. They built another store in Phoenix between 1885 and '90, and it's been here in various locations ever since.

KU: Do you remember where the very first location was, the one that didn't work out?

RG: I believe it was between First and Second Street on Washington Street.

KU: Mr. Goldwater just told me that Mr. Bert Fireman at ASU has the written history of the Goldwater Stores.

RG: Barry and Bert dug it all up. Barry's quite a historian. He keeps up with the family.



KU: So, now I'd like to go into your background.

RG: Do you want me to start with the schooling?

KU: Do you remember very much about Miss Ellis?

RG: Miss Ellis' kindergarten. I've told you of the little play where Ping Bell and I were married, and Barry was the preacher. This was a mock wedding that was held in an old tin theatre down about Monroe and First Street. I think they call it the Coliseum, but I couldn't swear to it.

Miss Ellis' kindergarten was out on the West side, on West Washington, or someplace ...it's hard to remember, but the town ditch ran through Phoenix at that time. I can remember walking home and Barry fell in the canal.

KU: Did you pull him out?

RG: Oh, he hung on to something and I ran home and got my mother. We went back and got him out. (laughs) I was five or six years old at the time.

KU: Your father died in 1929?

RG: '29, yes.

KU: Were you quite young?

RG: I was in Stanford.

KU: You must have been in college at that time.

RG: Let's see, I was nineteen years old. I was sophomore football manager at the University of Illinois. I remember I got the news when I was out chasing footballs one day.

He died the year the Arizona Biltmore Hotel opened. We had a store out there and he put on a fashion show the night before. He'd had angina pectoris for a long time and it just happened the attack hit him that night.

KU: That's too bad. You said that your mother was one of the first nurses?

RG: Yes, my mother went to Cook County, a medical school or nursing school in Chicago. She came out to Phoenix because of tuberculosis and lived in a tent out in an area which is now Sunnyslope. She was cured by our wonderful climate and went to work at St. Joseph's Hospital. In fact, she assisted Dr. Payne Palmer, Sr. in his first operation. While she was nursing, she met my father and they were



married, I think it was 1906.

KU: That's very interesting. Then, she didn't continue working?

RG: No, no.

KU: Now, you said you went to Stanford?

RG: After I went to Illinois two years, then I transferred to Stanford. There were two other boys from Phoenix, Paul Fannin, who's now a senator, and Bob Creighton, who we call Beano, who were also transferring. I think they transferred from Arizona, and another friend of ours, Paul Sexson, who was then in Stanford. The four of us got a house together in downtown Palo Alto. So, I've known Paul Fannin for a long time, as well as Beano.

KU: When you came back, would you tell your history of working here? Why was it that you had wanted to work at Bullock's?

RG: When I came home, I was going to work for the store, and I thought I'd like to get a little experience in another store and they how they did it. To my mind, Bullock's was the top store in Los Angeles at that time. So, I went over there, and applied for a job, and of course in 1931, there just weren't any jobs available.

I finally told this fellow that I'd work for nothing, and he said, "Well, we couldn't do that." They had to put me on the payroll. So, they gave me a dollar a year, or a dollar a week, and I started out in the stock department cleaning the shelves, and I worked through the entire store. I was in the personnel department, men's department, shoe department, piece goods. I went through the whole thing for a year. Then came back and went to work for Goldwater's.

In 1933, there was a re-organization you might call it, of the Valley National Bank. Walter Bimson came out from the Harris Trust in Chicago, became president of the bank, and I was put on his first board of directors. He asked me to come to work for the bank. He said he'd teach me how to be a banker. 'Course at that time the Valley Bank's deposits were slightly under seven million dollars, which is quite remarkable when you think that the bank is a three-billion-dollar bank today.

KU: How did it happen that Mr. Bimson asked for you ...?

RG: Well, my mother, my father, and my uncle were about the third largest stockholders in the bank. My uncle was still alive, my father was dead, but my uncle lived in Prescott. Walter asked my mother who she's like to have represent her on the board, and she suggested that he put me on the board, so he did.

Then I worked in the bank and worked through all the departments. When I was starting, I'd worked my



way up to be a bookkeeper, and there were only seven of us keepin' those old-fashioned books for the entire Valley Bank. The director's meetings were interfering with my bookkeeping, so I told Walter one day that I thought I ought to resign, and he agreed with that.

KU: How long were you at the bank? What types of things were going on at the bank at that time?

RG: I was at the bank for over three years.

KU: What was the impression that Walter Bimson had on the bank employees?

RG: Well, Walter came from Chicago, and at that time, the bank hadn't been making many loans. Things were tough in '31, and they put in the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, RFC, that would lend money to banks. Walter took advantage of that and started a very liberal loan policy in the Valley Bank, and we were making loans that other banks wouldn't make. As a result, the bank started growing and it really aided Arizona its growth to have a bank being that loose with its money, you might say.

KU: Now I wanted to get a little bit more specific, if it's possible. At the board meetings, now was this enthusiasm pushed by Walter Bimson, or did he ask the board of director's opinions?

RG: Oh, sure, a bank is run by its board of directors, presumably. They have to approve of everything that the management does.

KU: I just wonder if Walter Bimson had done a lot of convincing of board members?

RG: Oh, certainly. Walter had to bring his policies to the board and convince us that they were proper things to do, and he did ... we agreed with him.

KU: Well, did he have a difficult job convincing the board members?

RG: No, he didn't. There was a fellow named Dr. Ricketts, who was chairman of the board. He was a mining engineer; a very brilliant man but not versed in banking, as was Walter. Dr. Ricketts had the foresight and vision to realize that Walter was on the right track and sort of let him have his head, and the board went along with everything he did.

During those days, banks didn't engage in small loans of any type; they were all just commercial loans, you might say. Places like the Morris Plan, where you went if you had to borrow three hundred dollars, and you left an arm and a leg, but you got your money and sweat it out payin' it back. And, during those years, the Valley Bank went in to making small loans, and that's about the time that Walter Bimson came out and Walter organized our small loan department, which is now Consumer Loans of all types – automobile loans, and that type of thing, are all under that department today. The bank just grew and grew.



KU: Now, I assume you've maintained your relationship with Walter Bimson, have you?

RG: Oh yes, I'm still on the board of directors of the valley Bank.

KU: Oh, you still are on the board? I see.

RG: I resigned when I was working there, but then I left the bank, in about '36. Our general manager of the store went on his vacation, and while on his vacation, he got married and didn't come back. Then a lady that had been with the store for forty years or more, who had been our chief accountant, died. Barry asked me to come back to the store and help him, so I left the bank and went back and worked for Goldwater's. After that, why Walter put me back on the board.

KU: I see.

RG: I guess, well, I know, I've been on the board of the Valley Bank longer than any board member, including all of the present officers.

KU: Oh, for heaven's sake. Well, now where would you place Walter Bimson in his contribution to the development of Phoenix?

RG: Oh, right at the top.

KU: In what particular areas do you think have been his main contributions?

RG: I think that the way he handled the bank and made money available to people who wanted to go into business here. He was willing to go along with them - take risks that other bankers, at that time, were not willing to take in the farming area, in the manufacturing area, well, all of the business areas. I think the Valley Bank's influence on the community has been great, and it's been great because of Walter Bimson's attitude as a banker, and the bank is still continuing those policies, I think, now.

Aside from that, in the arts - Walter helped a lot of young painters get started. He has a great art collection of his own. The Valley Bank has equally as great an art collection. Walter was equally as big in the symphony ... all of the things that makes a community grow. Very civic minded, worked on community projects. Walter gave a lot of his time to Phoenix.

KU: He certainly did. Was he a strong administrator in the bank?

RG: Yes, he was.

KU: Since you're on the board, do you remember some very important business developments that he brought into the Valley?

RG: Oh, I couldn't right off-hand. There are books on that, too. The growth of the Valley Bank. This



has all been documented. Carl just wrote a book last year, I think.

KU: I heard about that book, and he didn't mention it to me.

RG: I don't think I have a copy of that around anywhere I can put my hands on it.

KU: What was the name of the book?

RG: I don't remember, but there have been several – just ask the Valley Bank. They'll give you books on it.

KU: We have the *Financing the Frontier*.

RG: I believe Walter wrote *Financing the Frontier*, didn't he?

KU: Do you know, I've forgotten. I read it several years ago. I'm going over there this afternoon to look through their written material.

RG: Well, you'll find a lot more than I can tell you. You go along ...you take these things for granted, and you sorta forget them.

KU: Then you maintained active management of Goldwater's?

RG: Yes.

KU: For about what period was that?

RG: Barry and I were in the store together until he ran for the city council in 1948. In those days, that was quite a thing for him to do and he wrote me a letter that I have somewhere, saying that he realized that he might be making a mistake getting into politics, but he felt that someone had to do it ... that you just couldn't sit around and blame the other guy unless you were willing to go in and take a run at it yourself.

So, he was on the city council and that takes more time than people think that it does. I think those people are underpaid myself. Then in 1952, why he ran for the United States Senate. After he won that, he wasn't in the store much anymore. From '52 on, you might say, why Barry wasn't around much.

KU: Going back to the earlier years, when you were first in Goldwater's, what types of things were going on at Goldwater's? Had there been changes in merchandising?

RG: Well, of course, in those days we were in that downtown store that is no longer there. It's been torn down and we only had something like thirty-five thousand square feet in the entire store, if that much. And, in the early days, of course there was no air conditioning. In the summer, why we'd have to



go check the front door once in a while to make sure it wasn't locked. (laughs)

KU: Why would it be locked?

RG: Well, there wasn't anybody in there. (laughter) People left Phoenix, if they could, in the summer, before air conditioning. We had these circular fans on the ceiling ... stirred the air up a little ... didn't do much good ... just moved the hot air around a little.

KU: Did you stay open all afternoon?

RG: Oh, yeah. We were the first store to close on Saturday afternoons.

KU: You were? Was that just during the summer?

RG: Yes, we were the first. I think we were the first store to even have a fluorescent sign out in front and then we had the first "magic-eye" doors in town. We used to try to be first with everything.

During the War, we bought a twenty-acre farm south of town for the employees to grow vegetables, and we had a few head of cattle out there, and a deep-freeze box, and a swimming pool. But we were small enough then ... a twenty-acre farm would handle us all.

KU: Did the employees enjoy raising vegetable out there?

RG: Oh, yeah, sure ... because especially, remember during the war you had to have food stamps, and these were their own. They'd grow their own things and milk the cows.

KU: They actually went out and milked the cows regularly?

RG: Yeah ... we had some steers, a few steers that we'd butcher, and it was ... just a community sort of a little project.

KU: Do you remember where it was located?

RG: Yeah, it was on Southern Avenue and about 26th Street. It's no longer there, it's all sub-divided, I guess.

KU: What else happened to the store during the War years? Was business good or was it bad, or ...?

RG: It was good enough. You could sell most anything you got, so there was no problem, but ...

KU: Did you have trouble getting merchandise?

RG: Oh, yes. Silk stockings were just something that ...



KU: I remember (laughs)

RG: There were a lot of things like that ... silk stockings come to mind, but then during the War they had an excess profits tax on too, so you didn't (laughs) really want to make anything. We'd put on war bond drives in the store. I was chairman of the war bond drives for Phoenix. Walter Bimson was state chairman.

KU: Did you go around and give speeches about it, or ...?

RG: Oh, yeah. Put on events and get Bing Crosby ... I don't remember if Bob Hope came over in those days, but I remember one big party we had with Bing Crosby, and four other fellows came over with him.

KU: This was a party?

RG: Well, we put on a fashion show at the Arizona Biltmore, and for everybody that'd buy a certain denomination War Bond, Bing would sing a song for them and then autograph a record.

KU: Really?

RG: Let's see, there's Rags Ragland, and Phil Silvers were with him, and his two songwriters. What are their names? Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke. They were here about a week that time. We'd go around selling as many bonds as we could. (laughs)

KU: Did you set some kind of record with your bonds?

RG: Oh, I don't remember about records, but we went over our quota all right.

KU: Was it difficult getting labor, or did you not have any trouble?

RG: We didn't have any trouble.

KU: You had mostly female?

RG: Mostly female, yes ... sometimes, I remember, I think I was the only male left in the store.

KU: Well, (laughs) ... I suppose that would be expected during the war.

RG: Yeah.

KU: Now what happened with shipments and things like that? Were there other things that you tried to get that were ...?



RG: Oh, they were slow ... other things had priority during those years. Any military movements ... airplanes or trains, it didn't matter, but that wasn't ... seemed to be plenty of merchandise, but you could sell whatever you had.

KU: Why was that?

RG: 'Cause it was in short supply ...but ... nobody was kickin'.

RG: How has merchandising changed ... was there a change after the war?

RG: Oh, sure.

KU: Do you remember some of the changes?

RG: Well, in our case, we realized that we couldn't stay a little store downtown and keep the position that we had. In that little store, we probably had more fine lines of merchandise than any ... any store in the country ... including Neiman-Marcus, because we could get any line we wanted because there weren't other larger stores here competing with us in that field, you know. Stores like Korrick's and Diamond's were ... they didn't go for the real top lines, which you call couturier, and that sort of thing.

But we knew that it would only be a question of time before Bullock's or Magnin's, somebody would come in to Phoenix 'n build a bigger store. Then the question came as to where to build it, and we finally settled on the Norton Dairy out here, which Burgbacher's had bought. It's now Park Central and I spent many a sleepless night after I decided to go out there. All my friends at the Arizona Club told me this was the end o' Goldwater's.

KU: Why did they think that? You mean because you left downtown?

RG: Left downtown. 'Course we kept the store downtown when we moved out here. Ours was the first store in Park Central. The others came shortly after. But, in a year or two, we closed the downtown store 'cause it was so much better out here. That was quite a big jump for us to go from thirty-five thousand square feet or less, to over a hundred thousand square feet.

KU: Oh, is that right?

RG: And, it's since been enlarged. And then we had a small store in Scottsdale and started out with, maybe twelve-hundred square feet, where Hobo Joe's is now, and then we gradually took over that whole building. We built it up to thirty-five hundred square feet and then about 1960 we built our big store in Scottsdale Fashion Square. We also were the first store in that shopping center.

We'd always kept the store in Prescott. My uncle lived till about 1939. As you know, he was mayor of Prescott for about twenty-seven years. Uncle Morris is a story in himself. He was vice-president of the



constitutional convention, helped write the Arizona Constitution. He was one of the founders, if not the founder, of Masonry in Arizona ... thirty-third degree Mason. He gave Barry his thirty-third ... fifty years after he got his.

So, we kept the store up there and, in fact, the store today is still in Prescott. When we merged with Associated Dry Goods, I thought that they wouldn't want to keep that up there, but they did. They've kept the store up there.

KU: And you stayed with Goldwater's even after ...

RG: After we merged with Associated Dry Goods ... they asked me to stay on. They keep their stores in divisions. For instance, in Los Angeles, it's J.W. Robinson, that's their division, and so we have a Goldwater's division, and I was president of that division until '68.

KU: Have there been changes since you merged with them?

RG: Have there now? Oh yes, they've added on to both stores ... they added on to the Phoenix Park Central store ... they put a second floor on the Scottsdale store, which was built for it. We built it, 'cause we knew it would grow. They built the store at Metrocenter; they've built a store in Albuquerque, they're just about to start in Tucson, there'll be one out toward Mesa, one out in Paradise Valley.

KU: Oh, good heavens, I didn't realize ...

RG: Yeah, those are on the drawing boards. Well, as things get bigger, I think the contact with personnel is much harder to maintain. We used to have picnics and various events during the year with a breakfast, at least once a year, where we told all of the people working with us exactly how the store was doing, and how much was going into their retirement plan. We had the first retirement plan in Phoenix, at least for stores. Now the bank had one before we did and working in the bank, I saw how good they were, so I started one for the employees of Goldwater's and a very liberal one. We were probably the first store to have health insurance and life insurance.

KU: Oh my.

RG: We did many things for our employees that in those days were, or might have been, considered "far out." Today they're commonplace, but we like to think that we did them without any pressure from anybody. We were, pretty much, all on a first-name basis. Barry walked through the store, everybody called him Barry. Everybody called me Bob, and I really think we had good employee relations, and I think they probably do ... they still have. I doubt if they were as good as they were when we were so small. That's one thing we were proud of, and I've always felt that if you have good customer relationships and good employee relationships, why you've got it made. Of course, you've got to have good manufacture relationships too, but I'd put them third.



KU: Now, what about minorities?

KU: Oh, there was never any minority problem in Phoenix. You hired people whether they were Black or Mexican, or White. I remember the first ... oh, after Barry got into politics, you know, they'd use anything to throw at him, so they started in on the store and minorities. So, we'd just count them out and say, "All right, what's wrong?" They they'd have nothin' to kick about. In those days, there weren't many Black people that wanted to be ... salespeople, for instance. I took some of the Black people that were working in service departments of the store and said, "How'd you like to try your hand at selling? Ah, well, they'd give it a try. And after several months, they'd come back and say, "Lemme have my old job back." But, if they made it, they stayed on. The minority problem is something "new" at least in Phoenix. When I grew up here, why on our neighborhood ball team, there were one or two Black boys ... or just whoever happened to be in the neighborhood that you'd wanted on the ball team. I don't know, I never thought much about it when I was growin' up. I don't think kids do.

KU: I wondered, you said that you were involved in the financial arrangements. Have those changed, and how have they changed over the years?

RG: Well, now they're Associated Dry Goods ... is a large outfit, and they handle all that.

KU: In the early days, was financing difficult to come by or was ...?

RG: Well, not just free to everyday business, you know. You'd go down to the bank and borrow money to buy your spring merchandise, and then when you sold it, you'd pay the bank off and then when you had to go to New York and buy some more, you'd borrow some more money. It was a revolving line of credit that you kept payin' off. But when we decided to move to Park Central, that was a different story. I had to go back to some of the Life Insurance Companies and arrange long-term loans. That was a little more difficult.

KU: Did you find them here, or did you have to go out of state?

RG: Oh, I went to Boston to large insurance companies ... John Hancock made us our loan.

KU: And the Valley ...?

RG: Well, banks don't make long-term loans such as that. See, for instance, if you were going to build a building, an office building, you'd go to an insurance company and get a thirty-year loan, or a twenty-year loan, whichever best suited your needs. You'd pay them so much a year plus interest, but they would only lend you that money on a completed project. You'd go to a bank while you were building it and get what you call an interim loan, so as soon as the banks will lend you the money on an interim basis if they have a take-out by another party, which is usually an insurance company for the long-term bit.



KU: Did this insurance company ... did you have any personal reason to go to it?

RG: You shopped around, see who would give you the best rate ...

KU: Was it difficult?

RG: Who'd give it to you first ... (laughs) who gives you the best rate, second. (laughter)

KU: I was just trying to find out if there were any Phoenix contacts with Boston Insurance groups ...

RG: Oh well, sure ... with my connections with the Valley Bank, I'd ask them, "Who would you go see?" And the office that we have, New York banks carry accounts with the Valley Bank. The Valley Bank carries accounts with them and Boston Banks, 'n from all over the country, so they tell you who to go to.

KU: I see. Now, was it ever difficult to sell these companies on ...?

RG: Oh, yeah. Very difficult.

KU: How did you ... what did you present as evidence?

RG: Well, you just show 'em your balance sheet and what you think you can do.

KU: Oh, it didn't have anything to do with the development of the Valley per se, is that right?

RG: Oh sure, you have to show them that to move out of downtown, you have to give your reasons why you think a store is gonna' go out there.

KU: Did you have market research background?

RG: Oh, sure ... sure.

KU: Okay, I just wondered. Maybe we should go on to Del Webb since we're running out of time. How did you get acquainted with Del Webb? When did you first know him?

RG: Hmm, I don't remember the actual date. I met him, but ... Do you know any of Del's history?

How he came to Phoenix?

KU: You didn't know him in California, did you?

RG: No, no. Del was a baseball pitcher over there and worked for his dad in the construction business. He came ... I think his father sent him to Phoenix to see if he couldn't do a little better on his



own and he started as a carpenter. He worked on the Westward Ho when it was built.

I think you know the story of how he was workin' on the Bayless Store, not A.J.'s, but his father's, and the contractor went broke, and Mr. Bayless let Del take it over, and he started out as a contractor.

Then, the first house I ever built ... when I was in the bank ... we owned a thirty-acre piece of land, which is now called Country Club Manor and I talked to Walter one day and suggested that the bank subdivide that. There were only seven major officers in the bank, and he let me in as a bookkeeper at the time, so that was my project, to develop Country Club Manor.

I built the first house out there. Barry and I did at the same time. He built one on the west side; I built a little one on the east side. Del Webb was the contractor. It was sixty-seven hundred dollars, the contract. Then Del joined the Phoenix Country Club, and we got to playin' golf together ... he and Herb Askins and myself ... Cliff Upton. Gray Madison played with us a lot too. You know, you might go talk to Gray. You know Gray's in pretty bad shape, but he can talk all right. I'll tell you later about him.

KU: I just wondered how you happened to choose Del Webb to be your contractor ... what was his reputation at that time?

RG: I'd probably met him at the Phoenix Country Club ... that was in 1936 that I built that house. He hadn't been a contractor long, but then Del's first job of any size was the Sears Roebuck building that was downtown. I think it's been torn down. But where Del made his money was when the war started, Del got contracts to build a lot of the air bases and he just ... he went back to Washington and talked to everybody and he got these contracts.

KU: Did he have a particular contact in Washington?

RG: No, no he didn't. Of course, later on he knew everybody there, but at that time he didn't. But he'd bid on these jobs and he'd get them, and then I know he came to me once and he says, "I know you know a lot of people with money ... see if you can get them to put some money up for this air field, and they'll have a piece of the company." Well, these people just laughed at me. Del was such a small contractor at the time, but some way or other he got it done.

KU: There were some people that did put some money up?

RG: I don't think so. (laughs) I think just the banks helped him and he sorta' did it all on his own.

KU: Was the Valley one of his banks?

RG: Yeah. Del, at one time was a director of the bank ... later on ... quite a bit later on.

KU: But in the early years, who was it at the bank that believed in him? Was there any particular ...?



RG: Oh, just people like Walter Bimson, I guess, and he built air fields all over the country. And then he ... where Del got his real break was when they came along with this tax scheme, “pay as you go,” and to do it they had to forgive one year’s taxes and Del wasn’t a corporation, he was just an individual, so he was forgiven one year’s taxes, and that’s where he was able to accumulate enough to get really going.

KU: Now, what tax scheme was this?

RG: Was it the Rummel tax plan? You know, you pay taxes now as you go ... take somepin’ out of your check each ... it used to be, at the end of the year, you figured up your taxes and paid ‘em the next year.

KU: Well, when that first came in, they forgave the first ...?

RG: So, they had to do that ... they had to forgive a year’s taxes. Nobody could pay all their taxes in one year. It didn’t help corporations, it just helped individuals.

KU: Well, that’s great ... I didn’t realize that.

RG: Del was smart enough, you know, you’d talk to Del, and you’d think there’s just ... you just didn’t believe he could do all those ... something like that, but he did do that all on his own and then, as I told you, he’d been a ball player and ... what was the fellow’s name?

KU: Topping?

RG: No, there was a fellow came to Don Topping and Del and he had a chance to buy the Yankees, and Del and Dan did buy them. Del apologized to me for not lettin’ me have some of the stock because he said that in the agreement there couldn’t be anybody else ... so ... that’s okay and so they, Dan Topping and Del, lent this other well-known fellow ... baseball figure ... lent him the money to buy his share of it, which was something like \$200,000.00. As I remember, the whole thing cost ‘em \$6000,000 and that included the Yankee Stadium. The steel in it was worth three million. Oh, that was all down payment and I think they paid, maybe three million for the whole thing, but the down payment was six hundred. This fellow managed the team for a while and then at a Victory Dinner in New York, he got a little rough on Del, and Dan just bought him out on the spot ... let him go.

KU: Now I wondered if you’d tell us something about Del Webb ... just as a personality and your friendship with him. When did you become personal friends?

RG: In about 1936, we became good friends.

KU: Is that through the contracting, or golf, or ...?



RG: Oh, probably playing golf, and he was a close friend of my first wife's father, and I was a good friend of my father-in-law too, but he died the year I was married, so he wasn't around long. Oh, in those days, why Del would have an occasional drink on a hand-shake. He and I went to a lot of tournaments and had a lot of fun together. Del never smoked, never drank coffee. I don't believe he even had a Coke in his life, but he did hit the booze. But, along about '49 or so when he got to really being important, he quit drinkin' because of ... I think because of the strains of business. He said that a doctor told him to, but I think he just quit because he had so much to do that he couldn't afford to drink. I don't believe Del had a drink from about 1950 till he died.

KU: Oh, really?

RG: He was a disciplinarian.

KU: You mean with himself, or with others?

RG: With himself and with other people. He had a sign on his desk, "No Smoking." You couldn't go in his office and smoke.

KU: Did you used to smoke?

RG: No, I've never smoked. That's why the two of us like to go on these golf ... everybody'd go, but Del and I always roomed together, 'cause neither one of us smoked. We gambled a little.

KU: Was he a good gambler?

RG: He was about as bad as I am.

KU: He was a risk taker, is that what you're saying?

RG: Oh, when you shoot dice, you're takin' risks. (laughs) We used to play poker and gin rummy.

KU: What kind of a poker player was he?

RG: Lousy.

KU: Why?

RG: He just ... some people have good card sense and some people don't.

KU: He didn't have good card sense?

RG: Not particularly. And stubborn ... if he played gin rummy, why ... he got in the game once where instead of Jack, Queen, King being a meld, they'd also let you have "go around the corner," they called



it. You could have the Ace, King, Queen. So, he said, “That’s the way you play it.” And that’s the way he wanted to play and anybody that would say, “No, we’re not gonna’ play that way.” He says, “Okay, you play the way you want; I’ll play the way I want.” So, he’d keep on puttin’ ‘em down that way.

KU: (laughs) Oh, a little bit bull-headed, huh?

RG: Yeah.

KU: You said that when you talked to him, it didn’t seem like he could do all the things that he did, now what did you mean by that?

RG: Del didn’t impress you as being a real smart guy. I mean, you know there are people like that who are ... very deceptive and ... nothin’ seemed to bother him. I remember playin’ golf with him one day and some guy threw a firecracker behind him ... went off right while he was over his putt. He acted just as if he never even heard it. He drove in to a fellow on a first hole one day. This guy came back ... Del was a tall guy ... this little guy standing there just chewin’ him out and Del just looking at him like he never heard anything he said. The guy must have walked off completely frustrated ... (laughs). I don’t know if Del did hear anything he said.

KU: Then he had a great deal of self-control?

RG: He concentrated and ... he just ... he always looked like he was fumblin’ around but everything he did seemed to be right. You can’t fault success.

KU: No, I wondered what you attribute his success to?

RG: I think, just determination and concentration. He knew what he was after, and that’s the way he went.

KU: Were you satisfied with the way he built your houses?

RG: Oh, sure. He was a good builder.

KU: You considered him a good builder?

RG: Um, hmm. Fred Holmes was his foreman on my house and Fred branched out on his own ... became one of the best builders in the Valley.

KU: Oh, really? I’d kind of like to talk to Fred Holmes.

RG: He’s dead. His sons are running his business now.

KU: I see. Now, how do you explain Mr. Webb’s being so huge?



RG: I don't know. I think it's a matter of maybe being in the right place at the right time. On these air fields, that's what started him and the changes in the tax laws that one year must have saved him. I'd say it had to save him five or six million dollars. Otherwise, he couldn't have accumulated it. You know, it's hard for an individual with the taxes the way they are to accumulate enough to do anything that big. But when he got a break in that one year, that helped him a lot. Just like, in my old business, I told you how many stores Associated Dry Goods is going to build, Goldwater stores. There's no way we could have ever borrowed enough money to do that.

KU: Now, Mr. Webb's personality ... was he a social person? Did he like parties, or ...?

RG: When he was drinking, he liked them and later on I remember him sayin' one day. "You know, I went to a cocktail party the other night," and he says, "People sure have changed, they're not as much fun as they used to be." He says, "What's happened to all these people?" I said, "Well, Del, you're lookin' at it from a little different angle." (laughs)

KU: You mean that was after he had quit drinking?

RG: After he quit drinkin'. He got where he didn't want to go to parties.

KU: How did he seem to feel about Phoenix after he got so successful?

RG: Well, he always considered Phoenix his home, although he had a beautiful house over in Bel Air. After Hazel and he were divorced, why he stayed in Los Angeles most of the time. He used to live right next door to us.

KU: Oh, he did? He and Hazel?

RG: Um-hmm.

KU: I see. She's out in Sun City.

RG: She's out in Sun City. He married a girl that worked in Bullock's, Toni. She was much younger, and they built this beautiful place over ... I imagine they bought it in Bel Air.

KU: She was a socialite, wasn't she? Or was that after she got married?

RG: After ... she got married.

KU: Oh, is that right?

RG: She was a hat buyer at Bullock's.

KU: Is that right?



RG: Oh, yeah. My cousin knew her real well. She worked in Bullock's too.

KU: And she met Del Webb, somehow.

RG: Hmm. But Toni's a ... Toni's a good gal, but Del never liked to go out. Toni's a pretty girl ... got a lot of personality. She may be a socialite now.

KU: Her name and picture are in the papers all the time in California.

RG: I guess that's true.

KU: Now, Mrs. Webb, the first Mrs. Webb, she had been with him at the ...?

RG: Oh, they were married when they were eighteen, or so.

KU: Was she from Phoenix, or where was she from?

RG: No, I guess San Francisco or Oakland.

KU: She was from ... and they came out here and didn't she help him in his business?

RG: Oh yes, Hazel ran the whole office and they had an office out by the state capitol before all the other buildings were built. It was right on the corner and their office was downstairs, and their home was upstairs. They lived just above it ... little old wooden place. Hazel was very much responsible ... had a lot to do with Del's success.

KU: She did ... because she was a good office manager?

RG: Yeah, yeah.

KU: Did Mr. Holmes consider Del Webb a good carpenter, a good construction ...?

RG: Oh, yes, he did. That's where ... Holmes probably got his training there, you see. He was one of his foremen.

KU: No, I meant Del Webb, personally. Was he considered technically very capable or competent?

RG: Yes, I think Del would have to be, because he did all those things. As I say, when he came out here, he worked as a carpenter. Del showed me some pictures once ... Del was very near-sighted and he said that helped on heights and he showed me a picture of him walkin' on those steel buildings that they build in San Francisco. I said, "Didn't that bother you?" "Naw," he says, "If you're near-sighted, why it doesn't bother you as much." He says, "All those guys are near-sighted." (laughter)



KU: Well, that's an interesting approach. Now, do you happen to know about Del Webb's charities ... did he ... was he involved in? What are you grinning at? (laughs)

RG: That was one thing we always fought about. When I was on these different committees, Community Chest, Red Cross ... I'd go to Del and tell him I thought he ought to give such and such. In the first place, every meeting we'd have on these things, they'd pull out names and they'd say, "Bob, you get Del." Well, Del would say ... by that time he's gotten pretty big ... "Go see So and So" in his organization, and I'd get the run-around and so I'd get in some big arguments with him and then he'd always tell me about how much he did personally. I said, "Well, Del, I don't see any of that and neither does the community, now you ..." "Well, I do."

One year we were in an excess tax year, so I said, "Del, you can't keep any of this money this year, you made a lot, so why don't you set up a Del Webb Foundation and give as much as you can to that foundation this year. Then, in the coming years, give the money out of that foundation to these charities?" Well, he thought that was a good idea, so he set up a Del Webb Foundation. I still get things once in a while I have to sign that the foundation's giving it to somebody, but I think about six months ago, I resigned from that ... I didn't see any point ... Del was dead.

KU: So, he had a del Webb Foundation set up?

RG: That he took the money out all in this one year and then other good years I guess he was puttin' in, and then he'd give to the Community Chest out of this foundation, which they call United Fund and things like that. But I never considered Del a big giver.

KU: Did he have some kind of a hang-up on ...?

RG: No, I don't think he had a hang-up. It's ... I imagine when you've been broke, and you make a lot of money on your own and you're tryin' to hang on to it, why you're not apt to give, maybe as somebody that's been brought up to give. They're just different types of people.

KU: Did he show this in any other way when you were ... like, when you were traveling with him?

RG: Oh, he was never stingy. I don't mean that ... no, no ... not ... Del was ... Del was very generous.

KU: I see.

RG: But you asked me about charities and that is the one place I used to argue with him ...if Del were here, he'd still tell me I was crazy ... he says he's supported a lot of families that I didn't know about ... and he may have. But that didn't help me when I went out to try to raise money for the United Fund, or whatever. (laughter)



But then I went to him with the Boys Club ... when he owned the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas, and the Sahara Hotel still has a deal for the Phoenix Boys Clubs, where we sell ... if a Phoenix man donates \$300.00 to the Boys Club, the Sahara Hotel will give him free room and board and booze too, for about three days up there, I think it is.

KU: In Las Vegas?

RG: Yeah. The Boys Clubs make some money on that, and the Boys Club pays for their tickets up, but that's about all that comes out of there. We'll clear maybe forty, fifty thousand a year on that, which is a nice thing; that's the Del Webb Corporation.

KU: It certainly is. Del Webb set that up, did he?

RG: Um hmm.

KU: I wondered, what was Del Webb's cultural interest ... were there any?

RG: I don't believe so ... baseball.

KU: He was mainly ... baseball ... he was a sports enthusiast. Did he have time for sports after he got to be so busy?

RG: Well, he spent a lot of time with the Yankees and he ...

KU: Did he make some management decisions?

RG: Oh, sure he did. He and Dan Topping were the only two in it, after they got rid of this other fellow.

KU: So, the success of the Yankees really did have a lot to do with his decisions?

RG: Um-hmm. And, Del, in the whole baseball empire ... in the American League, when they had their meetings, Del had a lot to say.

KU: Oh, he did? Now, what other things was Mr. Webb interested in ... like, what types of things did he like to talk about, or did he have other hobbies that I haven't ...?

RG: Just normal men things.

KU: What was it about him that you ... that especially you liked, as a friend?

RG: Well, we just got along well. I didn't ... in the later years, I never saw much of Del, but when he's come over, he'd always phone me, and he'd ask me to come up to his office and he'd like to talk ...



and those talks were mostly reminiscing. I think ... really think Del got to be quite a lonely man. I don't think he had too many friends, because he was hard to get to. He ... he wasn't very out-going.

KU: Did he get less out-going in his later years?

RG: I think so ... because, at least before he could have a few drinks 'n have some fun with the guys, you know ... kick his heels up. I remember he and Barry drug a fellow named Shad Boyer who used to run a Packard Agency here ... they were all drunk ... they drug him downstairs and finally the next day they had to visit him in the hospital, but everybody laughed about it. Del used to have a lot of fun. Del and I had a ball in the old days, but then, he just got ... where he was a loner, more or less. I don't know who he knew on the Coast, particularly, but I know from what they tell me, he'd go out to the Los Angeles Country Club after work and play nine holes by himself. Very seldom played with anybody. He loved to play with Bob Hope, and he used to play with Crosby, but he and Crosby had a falling out somewhere along the road. But he and Hope were always good friends. They were friends right up till the time Del died. But I just don't know who his other friends were.

KU: To what do you attribute that he was lonely in his later years?

RG: Well, I think anyone that doesn't have friends is gonna' be lonely.

KU: Do you think he dropped his friends, or do you think he stayed away from Phoenix, or ... why?

RG: Well, I don't know. He just got busy. A man can get so busy with his work that he forgets other things.

KU: You don't think his second marriage had an influence on the situation?

RG: Oh, no ... I don't think so. I don't think so.

KU: Did Mr. Webb have a quiet personality or a ...?

RG: Yes.

KU: Rather reserved, or ...?

RG: Yes. He ... as I say in the later years, he was very quiet I thought. But, when we'd play golf, like he and Bob Hope and I were playing ... Hope was forever makin' jokes about him and Del would just sorta' walk along 'n once in a while, he'd come back with one of his own. It was ... pretty funny.
(laughs)

And he ... if he was out in front of a bunch of people, he liked to try to ham it up.



KU: Del Webb or Bob Hope?

RG: Del Webb.

KU: Oh, he did?

RG: Especially if he's with Hope. Hope would be clownin' around, so Del would ... figured he had to do somepin', and he'd go into it a little. He loved to talk in front of people, you know and ...

KU: Oh, you mean give speeches?

RG: Oh, yeah.

KU: Oh, I didn't know that.

RG: You'd get him up ... you couldn't shut him up most of the time. No, at these sports awards dinners, that the *Republic* and *Gazette* give ... I don't know ... I guess they started it. Maybe they all give it; now the Press Club gives it. Del was, when he had the Yankees, was invariably at the head table, and they introduced him, and he made a speech.

KU: (laughs) Well, they should.

RG: He was up there talkin' one year and Dizzy Dean was there, and Phil Harris was the emcee and they both knew about his failin' ... wantin' to talk ... and Dizzy Dean, right in the middle of Del's talkin' ... Dizzy yelled up at Phil, he says, "Hey, Phil ... when is the next bus for Tucson?" ... and Del kept right on talkin', and Phil says, "I'll look it up." Pretty soon, Dizzy's saying again, "When's the next bus for Tucson?" and Phil looked at him, he says, "It's just left." Well, Del went on ... finished his speech. You know the funny thing about that ... Casey Stengel was there, and Casey got real mad about it, and then Del, later on ... I guess it was the next day called me, and he blamed me for it.

KU: Why did he blame you?

RG: I don't know, he just figured that I was the only one that put 'em up to somepin' like that, but I really didn't do it. I knew they were gonna do it, but I didn't do it. (laughs) It wasn't my idea.

KU: But you didn't stop it, either.

RG: Well, but I couldn't a ... I couldn't have stopped it. (laughs) Those two cooked that one up themselves at the cocktail party before ... the Press Club. (laughs)

KU: Well, poor Mr. Webb, he was ... (laughs)

RG: Oh, he had a good time, yeah, he was a good friend. As I told you, he was my daughter's



godfather. Every year I'd have her send him a gallon of strawberry and a gallon of vanilla ice cream.

KU: Did he like ice cream?

RG: Loved ice cream. Oh, he liked all desserts, but ice cream was his favorite.

KU: Oh well, that was nice. Was he a pretty dutiful godfather?

RG: Yeah. I don't know as he did anything ... I think ... Hazel always sends a card, and then Toni always sent a present. Hazel still remembered and then after ... after ... see, Hazel was married to Del when he became Sally's godfather. That's when they lived next door to us. But she still sends her a card.

Then after Del married Toni, I guess he told her to be sure and send Sally somepin'. It comes from Del, but we know (laughs) that Toni picked it out, because it comes from departments in stores that, I'm sure, Del wouldn't go into.

KU: What kind of dresser was Del?

RG: A good dresser. Left on his own ... originally, he wasn't particularly a good dresser ... but, Toni made a good dresser out of him. And, that can happen.

KU: Oh yes, I'm sure it can.

RG: I think ... he became quite clothes conscious and he wore good looking clothes.

KU: In his later years?

RG: Yeah, I think Toni did that for him.

KU: I see. Was there a lot of bitterness in the divorce?

RG: No, I don't think so. No, in fact, I'm sure there wasn't. Del took very good care of Hazel and when Del would come over to Phoenix, he'd always ... I shouldn't say always, but I know that quite often he would call Hazel. He always made sure that she had everything she wanted.

KU: She didn't want to give an interview, and so ...

RG: Well, I wouldn't blame her for that.

KU: Well, I don't either. What else should we know about Mr. Webb? I've overstayed my time with you.

RG: They'll yell at me when they want me.



KU: Oh, they will? Oh, good.

RG: I hope. Oh, I don't know in generalities, that's ...

KU: You've given some specifics. I think it's been very interesting. He always went to the sports dinners, is that right?

RG: Oh, yes. I think Del was an honorary member of the Press Club. He was made an honorary Thunderbird.

KU: Why honorary?

RG: He couldn't ... to get in the Thunderbirds you have to be a certain minimum age, and after you reach a certain age, you become a life member. At forty-five you must go life, you're not active anymore.

KU: What about Mr. Webb's politics ... was he Democrat?

RG: Mr. Webb's politics were whatever he wanted. He was a Democrat and he got to be very chummy with most of the presidents, at least from what he told me.

KU: The Democratic presidents?

RG: Yeah, and the Republican. I think that Del played both ends against the middle.

KU: Well, then how did he get to ... was he contributing to both sides, do you think?

RG: I think so.

KU: That's where some of his money went?

RG: I would think that he would. In his position, I think I would. I don't know if I would or not, but (laughs), I'm pretty sure that Del did. (laughs)

KU: I wanted to ask you ... some people think that he had a particular contact in Washington, D.C. that helped him get some of those contracts.

RG: No. No ... not ... when Del got his contracts to start out ... Del knew no one. He later got to where he knew everybody in Washington, but ... Del's original beginning, he ... there's no way he could have known anybody. He just didn't. But he went back there and spent time back there and worked on it and he hired ...

KU: Did he ever tell you about those days?



RG: Oh, yeah. And he hired a good lawyer. I think his name was Brown ... that's a tough one to forget. When he was lobbying to get that windfall tax provision taken out.

KU: He hired him from Washington?

RG: Back in Washington, yeah.

KU: I suppose other people benefitted ...

RG: A lot of people did, yeah, sure. It was an astute move, but no, I don't believe Del had any contact in Washington at all.

KU: Did he tell you his political opinion? Didn't you have somearguments over them since ...?

RG: Oh, yes. No, he was ... Del was a registered Democrat ... you know, I was a registered Democrat until 1964, when ...

KU: I guess I had heard that.

RG: ... it became too embarrassing, but ...

KU: (laughs)

RG: Arizona ... if you weren't a Democrat, you didn't have a vote up until about the time of Barry. The Republicans didn't even ... well, they didn't fill twenty-five per cent of the people to vote for, so that the vote was in the primary, and Arizona was considered a Southern state, but those Democrats, including myself, were what you'd call Conservative Democrats, and ... Del was in no way a Socialist. He was in no way a Liberal ... so he could register Democrat, but he ... he would back Barry a hundred per cent, for instance.

KU: Oh, he would?

RG: Oh, sure. He gave Barry ... well, I remember I asked him for money during Barry's presidential campaign and Del says, "Well, I can see there's no way that Barry can win, but because it is Barry, I'm gonna give you a donation," and he did.

KU: Did he give a substantial ...?

RG: Um-hmm. But he ... he also told me that he was backing Lyndon Johnson.

KU: You're kidding?

RG: Well, he was, because he knew ... it was ... after Kennedy was killed, why there wasn't much



you could do to beat Johnson. You know, Kennedy was a martyr.

KU: Oh, yes.

RG: And Kennedy and Johnson could ride home on that, but ...

KU: Well, then what was he if he backed ... did he back your brother because of just friendship?

RG: Well ... and he believed in what Barry said.

KU: Then, how could he believe in what LBJ said?

RG: You sometimes back a guy because ... (laughs) ... you wanna' be on the winnin' side.

KU: Well, I just wondered which way his ... his real sentiments, which direction they went?

RG: I think ... I think if he'd had his druthers, he's like to have seen Barry elected. Now in, for instance, in our state contest, I'm sure he never backed anybody against Barry for the Senate.

KU: Did your brother ... did Barry get as well acquainted with Del Webb or ...?

RG: Oh yeah, they were good friends. Not as close as I was.

KU: Did they ever talk politics, or ...?

RG: Oh yeah, sure they did.

KU: Was Mr. Webb ... was he pretty involved, politically?

RG: Probably ...

KU: I mean, to the point ... of where he would ...

RG: He was ... with donations and ... he must have been, because he actually did know these people pretty well.

KU: The presidents and the ...?

RG: Um-hmm.

KU: Well, when you donate money, you have ...

RG: You have an entrée.



KU: Did he use his entrée ... did he ...?

RG: Well, I don't know what he woulda' used it for.

KU: Well, there are many things ...

RG: Except that ... except that ... a matter of ... liking to be with a president ... maybe gettin' a round of golf in with the president. You know ... depending on who you are, those things can mean a lot.

KU: Did these things mean a lot to him ... or did he ...?

RG: Oh yes, I know it meant a lot to him to be ... his friendship with Bob Hope meant a lot to him.

KU: Because of the status connected, is that right?

RG: Um, hmm.

KU: Well, Bob Hope must have enjoyed him.

RG: He did.

KU: I wonder why.

RG: Oh, Bob liked him, and Bob likes to win. Del wasn't as good a golf player as he thought he was. (laughs) It's funny, Del ... You could go ... over to the Los Angeles Country Club and look on the board ... he had a handicap of six, so the Bob Hope Tournament was on and it was about to start, and Del was gonna' play in it, so the fellow puttin' it on over there, he said, "Del Webb's entered the tournament 'n he's givin' us a six handicap in the pro-amateur," and he said, "I was told to call you and see what handicap he should have," and I said, "Well, you could give him eighteen, but he'd get awful mad about it ... he's gonna' get mad at anything you give him, but give him at least sixteen, and if he says anything, tell him that you called me and I told you that he had a bad back," which he did have, and so he put him down sixteen. But if you asked Del, his handicap was six.

KU: (laughs)

RG: We went up to Crosby's Tournament one year, and at that time Bing could give you any handicap he wanted ... up to twelve. This was a long time ago, so Del wanted to turn in his handicap ... still at a six, I guess, and I ... we stopped off in Los Angeles 'n played at Lakeside and then Del just played awful ... claimed his back was hurtin,' and I said, "Well, Del ... let me ask Bing to give you twelve shots." ... "Hell, no" ... and I said, "Well, Del, you're playin' with a golf professional ... they play for a living, and ... and, and dammit, you ought to give him a chance." "Aw," he says, "You feel that way about it, I won't play." I says, "Oh God, knock that stuff off."



Well, I used to sell the Calcutta Pools when they had them up there. So, he says, “Okay, if when you’re sellin’ the Calcutta Pool tonight, you explain that I have a bad back.” I said, “Fine.” So, I asked Bing to give him twelve, and he did ... and they never won anything. (laughs)

KU: Well, now in his very early years, though, he was a pretty good golfer, wasn’t he?

RG: No.

KU: Well, you know, Jerry McLain told me that he was ... when he first played in the country club, that he had ... isn’t that true, that he topped a lot of the pros scores and ...?

RG: One day at the Phoenix Country Club ... this happened ... it wasn’t during the tournament ... a couple of days before the tournament, up on the short tees and different pin locations, Del shot a sixty-seven. Well, he ... you know, this can happen if you hole everything in sight, but it just happened. The next day, he shot eighty-eight. But, sixty-seven was his game, from there on, and the reporters at the papers, they liked Del ... and Del could do things for them with the Yankees and all, and the story has gotten to be ... I’ve even heard that he played in the first round of the tournament ... well, I don’t ... ‘course I ...

KU: Somebody told me that ...

RG: ... don’t believe ... I don’t believe he ever played in the tournament. Of course, today he couldn’t ... in those days ... I’d let people ... I’d let anybody play to get an entry fee. (laughs) But, no ...

KU: Did you have something to do with the managing or developing some of the first tournaments?

RG: Well, I did it.

KU: You did ... they very first ones?

RG: All of ... well, the very first one was in 1932. I was over in Los Angeles then, and ... I wasn’t here so a group at the Phoenix Country Club put on the first tournament ... back then, \$1500 ... it was played at the Phoenix Country Club. Then they never had another tournament.

Oh, when I was in the 20-30 Club, I got a bunch of pros to come over for five hundred dollars for a one-day tournament, pro-am, that doesn’t even count. Then when I was a Thunderbird, I started the ... what we now call the Phoenix Open. For two years, it was the Western Open, and I was chairman from the first tournament on for over ten years.

KU: When was the first tournament ... do you remember?

RG: Well, the West ... probably around ’38.



KU: Oh, my goodness.

RG: And then in '40 and '41 we had the Western Open instead of the Phoenix Open ... and we've had them every year.

KU: What caused you to get it going? What was the ...?

RG: Well, when the Thunder ...

KU: Was it your idea, or ...?

RG: Yeah. When the Thunderbird started ... their main event ... they put on a thing called Fiesta Del Sol. Were you here then?

KU: Yes.

RG: When everybody wore the Mexican outfits around the street ...

KU: Charlie King's ...

RG: Just much like the Jaycees did on their Western. They put on a bit dance up on Camelback ... or on McDowell and Central where the library is now ... put a big tent up there and this whole thing was put on by the Thunderbirds and we just lost our fanny every year. For about two or three years ... and I got in about two years after the Thunderbirds were started and I said, "There's no need puttin' on a losing proposition ... let's put on a golf tournament."

KU: It was your idea?

RG: Oh yeah. And I did most of the work, too. So, we got that started.

KU: Well now, what did that involve?

RG: Getting a date from the PGA to ... and getting a place to hold it. We held it at the Phoenix Country Club ... every year for a long time, and some of the members there kicked about it, so Arizona Country Club took it on every other year for quite a while. Now it's back at the Phoenix Country Club again ... for at least the next ... the last two years and the next three, at least.

KU: Were there some particular problems involved in building it up?

RG: Oh, well sure. As I say, we started out at fifteen hundred, went to three thousand. The Western's cost us six thousand. Today they're playin' for over two hundred thousand.

KU: Oh, where does this money come from?



RG: We sell a program with ads in it. We go to people ... the biggest part is getting sponsors ... a man and his wife, they get ... if they're a sponsor, they get a ticket and they get their name on the program ... we sell tickets on a Cadillac, and ...

KU: Did you do that at the very beginning ... what did you do?

RG: At the very beginning we went out ... well, I remember one year I had a big meeting at the Phoenix Country Club ... invited all the businessmen in town ... didn't tell 'em what it was for and then sprung the tournament on 'em and got them to underwrite a certain number of tickets, and then we had that as a base and went out and sold tickets, and we sold a program in those days.

The Cadillac deal came a little later ... one of the golf pros told me he's seen it down in another city, so we did that, and now we've gotten ... we sell greens-keepers ... two hundred and fifty greens-keepers; for five hundred bucks and you can have your picture in the program ... you're a greens-keeper.

Oh, you do everything you can think of to sell ... to raise that money. Now, of course, today we have TV too, so we get some money for TV.

KU: Now, excuse me, in the beginning, did you have trouble convincing the businessmen that this was a good idea, or ...?

RG: Yeah, but they went along with it, and it's just gradually grown. Back in those days, the biggest tournament in the country was the LA Open ... \$10,000. That was just before ours. There weren't as many tournaments. Oh, it was a whole different ballgame. It was fun. The golf pros were ... they weren't playin' for that much money, and so most of the pros were ex-caddies.

KU: Oh, really?

RG: Very few college boys, and we'd have a big cook-out for the whole field down at the South Mountain ... fry steaks right in the middle of the winter ... and they ...

KU: Oh, really?

RG: ...loved it, and I'd have a party at my house for about sixty of the top guys, and they were the old-timers, like Walter Hagen and Gene Sayers, and people you've heard of ... Craig Wood. Some Italian boys ... their names escape me at the moment, but today ... today, I could ask ten of the top pros to my house for dinner, and I doubt if one would show up.

KU: Really?

RG: They don't party ... they're business ... they're playin' for too much money.



KU: Oh ... well, that's no fun.

RG: Back in those days without the college boys, they ... I was gonna' show you ...

KU: My tape is stopped ...

RG: ... This is a ... they wanted ... they didn't have the college boys in the PGA and so they started an advisory committee and they put me on that, and I ... I was chairman of it for about four years.

KU: Well, isn't that nice. Well, for heavens sakes.

RG: Isn't that somepin'? And they gave me this plaque over here on the wall ...

KU: Well, that's good ...

RG: ... this one up here ... it's a pretty nice little deal.

KU: Well, my tape is about to quit. I want to thank you very much for being on it.

