

Carol Lockwood interview 3-8-2024 (1).mp3

Sharon: All right. Right. We'll start this interview. It's the 8th of March, and I'm Sharon Smith here talking to Carol Lockwood. Um, just got a few questions. And so why don't we get started with the first question? How long have you lived in La Mesa?

Carol: We've lived here since 1957.

Sharon: And what are your earliest memories of La Mesa?

Carol: Well.

Sharon: And that could be the greater La Mesa area.

Carol: Uh, strangely enough, it seems like I've always been in the right spot at the right time. And, uh, for a variety of reasons, uh, going back just a little bit, my maiden name was Jacobson of Norwegian Heritage, and my grandfather was an artist in Norway. He painted that portrait of one of the fjords. And a couple of years ago, we took the Norwegian fjord trip and went to see and find the, uh, his farm, where one of the Viking ships, uh, in the Oslo Viking Museum was found on his property. And so we visited the historical society and their historical society, uh, offers you archival information at \$50 a half hour, so you can pay them whatever you want to pay and get as much as you want to get. And then they mail it to you so you have it when you get home. So it was quite an interesting experience. And, uh, they moved to Chicago when they moved from Norway. And I was born in Park Ridge, which is a suburb of Chicago, and I lived there till, uh, middle grammar school. And my dad, who was a fine carpenter and, uh, contractor, took a job at Universal Studios in North Hollywood, where some of our relatives had already moved. So we decided we would move. And I went to North Hollywood, uh, junior high and high school.

Everybody in North Hollywood was connected with the movies. If they didn't act, they played an instrument or they painted sets, or they everybody was somebody. And it was an interesting mix of people, because there was always somewhere exciting to go and see and do in my class. Uh, Marty Milner was in my class, and I used to date him, and our most famous, um, graduate from our class was John Williams, the composer

and the symphony director. And we used to call him curly because he had curly hair and he had a little band in the garage. So that's how he started. And so these were all wonderful memories. Well, one of the my boy friends and we all dated different people and went out a lot, uh, most of us didn't have cars, but there was a, uh, trolley that went down to Hollywood, down the pass, and we all took the trolley went to the movies all the way up and down Hollywood Boulevard. And this boy, uh, his name was Darwin Sinclair. And he and his family moved to La Mesa, uh, when we were in 10th grade. And he called me and wondered if I could come to the winter formal, uh, formal, because he hadn't met many people yet and didn't know who to ask.

So my parents agreed. His aunt and uncle brought me down here and there I was in the gymnasium at Grossmont High School. Just like that. Never heard of La Mesa. Never heard of Grossmont High School. Went back to North Hollywood where I was active in the student council. And I was honored Queen of Job's daughters and president of this, that and everything else. And when we graduated, uh, we all went to UCLA, except the wealthy ones who could afford to go to USC. USC was \$15 a unit. Whoa. And UCLA was \$43 a semester.

Sharon: Uh huh.

Carol: So I spent four years there at UCLA. In the meantime, I married my high school sweetheart, Brice, whom I had met in the library there at North Hollywood High School. And, uh, he went to UCLA the first year. And then Korean War came along. So he enlisted and was a corpsman in the Navy, attached to the Marines and ran a MASH style unit in Korea, a tent hospital.

Sharon: Uh hmm.

Carol: And when he, uh, uh, got out of the Navy after four years, he finished at UCLA. And I was by then working as a teacher at Birmingham High School. Birmingham used to be a Veterans Hospital that Truman closed. And he said all the veterans down to Long Beach.

And so the hospital was acquired by the Los Angeles School District for \$1. And it was one mile of corridors. All the buildings were single story buildings off a long corridor. We

each had our own wing, and I taught ceramics and, uh, art for four years there before Brice graduated. And, uh, he had his choice of San Francisco or San Diego. Well, San Diego was closer to North Hollywood, where our parents lived, uh, than San Francisco. So we chose San Diego. So here we come down the freeway. Well, there was no freeway. It was 101 at that time. And we started looking above Mission Valley, uh, new housing developments. Uh, they were too expensive. Then we went to Allied Gardens. They were in resale by then - \$14,500. Del Cerro was out of the question. Then we came to La Mesa and we found a nice little brand new tract in north La Mesa for \$10,500 - three bedroom & bath and a half. We lived at north La Mesa for ten years, and by then I had become, uh, president of the PTA, had taken ten years off of teaching. And, uh, our daughter was going to start here at Helix as a freshman. And our son was in elementary school. So we looked for a place to live, uh, that they could walk back and forth to school.

So if I couldn't get home in time, they could walk home. Um, so we were unable to sell our house. Business was not good. So we looked around here, this house was available. These people, their daughters, had graduated. They wanted something smaller. This is a big place. And we traded with a few thousand dollars. No realtor just went up, signed the papers and traded back and forth. No costs or anything. So we got here in 1967 and we have been here ever since. And in the meantime, I had taught, uh, well, when I was president of the PTA, there's a thing called the Mount Helix Council. It's all the presidents of all the PTA come together a couple times a year. And my husband had just had back surgery and was home for a while. So I tried to get him out occasionally to get out and about. And we went to the council meeting and there was one man in the room. So we take our chairs over so Brice would have some man talk instead of all these twittery women who talk. And it was Walter Barnett. Walter Barnett was the principal at Grossmont High School. Uh, and so I told him, well, hello. Yes, I used to teach art, uh, taught art for 4 or 5 years in the LAUSD district.

And, uh, I've just been enjoying being a housewife and a mother these last ten years. So that was that. And Brice talked to him, and he seemed very nice. Three weeks later, he calls me and he says, have I got the job for you. I said, what? And he said, well, we need a part time teacher, and I know you're not interested in going back full time, but if you'd like to come part time, you can come and join us. So I said, well, I'll let you know. Hard to get. And, uh, so, uh, I thought about it and we had the house here now, and uh,

we were, uh, going to, you know, move on. So I said, yes, I would. Well, the first year I was part time, from then on, I was full time. And so I taught, uh, crafts, ceramics. And my minor was home economics. Well, it's now called family studies and consumer sciences. So, anyway, uh, I taught the foods and nutrition part mostly, and I was there for 30 years. Uh. I was going to tell you a little bit more about some of the things that we did at. Grossmont High School. Is that all right?

Sharon: Sure.

Carol: Or you want to keep asking me questions, or shall I?

Sharon: No. That's good. Good lead in. And it'd be interesting. Grossmont High School, was the castle high school.

Carol: Castle building. So much else, I guess.

Uh, I guess my most famous. Maybe I can get it without disturbing anything. Uh, my most famous memory. Could you get me that pile, please? Thank you. Is as, uh. We had a Christmas pageant for many years. I think it started in the 30s and when I came on I became the. In charge of the Madonna scene in the pageant. And I got to pick the Madonna. Every year. And, um, I had interviews. She had to be able to stand silently and not blink her eyes for three minutes. That was one of the qualifications. And so I always tried to choose the the person I thought who would do the best job. And it was a wonderful opportunity to, uh, participate in one of the most famous activities that they've had at Grossmont High School. Well, we had that until 1988. By 1988, there was very little Christ left in Christmas. Uh, the area had diversified. Everybody had other religions and interests or no religion. Or they wanted to to be, uh, Santa Claus and snowmen. We tried to diversify. We moved it from the auditorium at Grossmont to the El Cajon Performing Arts Center, which the district had a part interest in at that time, and we could use it for free. And we tried to add a winter scene and some other things. The teachers no longer wanted to allow the students to be released from class for, uh, rehearsals. And so finally we just gave it up. It was 1988, and that was last. The last Christmas pageant from Grossmont High School meant some of us still have, uh, recordings of those days. So it was really, really special. That's probably my most, um,

enjoyable memory of of, uh, Grossmont High School. Um. Let me see. What else about Grossmont? Um.

Sharon: The buildings have changed.

Carol: The buildings have changed. The art building. That first front building was built in 1945, right after World War two. And it housed Arts, um, uh, Photography and Home Economics. And, uh, in my Home Economics room, I had seven kitchens, all for four people, 28 students. And we cooked twice a week. Uh, and one of my best memories of the cooking part was that when we came to the fish unit in the class, uh, we walked over to Anthony's and Craig Ghio sat us down, and he brought out fresh fish, and he showed all the students what fresh fish looked like. And then he, uh, uh, supplied them with a little shrimp cocktail. Some of them have never even had a shrimp cocktail. And so each of them had \$5 per kitchen to spend on the fish there, at the fish market. And they said, well, can we buy lobster? And we said, well, you buy whatever you want to cook. But for lobster, you're not only get a little tiny bite, you're best off buying cod or something else that was not so expensive. So he sold each of my kitchens and I had two sections, two classes, fifth and sixth period. He then drove me back to school with all my fish, and the students walked back and then they cooked the next day.

So it was, uh, Craig's been a close friend ever since, and he's never forgotten our experiences there. So, uh, you know, it's it was a comfortable place. Now they have the little theater there, which is very nice. Uh, I have been to a performance there and I don't know if they even have Home Economics anymore, but, uh, they still do have an art department, which is in the administration building on the far side. So I have a kind of a memorial, uh, art mosaic structure in a little park behind the building there. And the wall was put up in 1935 by the, uh, CCC or somebody like that from the Roosevelt administration. So there's a lot of history right in that little section there. Um. Let me see. What else. I was also active in a lot of other things. I was president of the sorority Alumnae Panhellenic. I'm a member of PEO which is another women's group, and Delta Kappa Gamma, which is a. Honorary for teachers and administrators. So I was going to mention too, and I forgot to mention that this boyfriend, Darwin, he became the chief of police in El Cajon. Ah. And so he went on to good things as well. Um, then, uh. You asked about the beginnings of the society, the historical society. Right?

Sharon: Right. Because I think you were one of the founding members.

Carol: I was there and it was 1975, and it was the year before the bicentennial, and everybody was interested in the history of America and doing something historical. So we had quite a group of people who were sort of the core group that began the organization, and we had a realtor on our committee by the name of Woody Linke. And she looked all over La Mesa for what she felt would be the best property to house our organization, and she chose the McKinney house because it had never been remodeled. It was always, uh, it was as it was. And, the family had mostly moved out. Donald, the youngest son, was still living there and we allowed him to sort of be the custodian caretaker as long as he could manage that, and we could trust him not to burn the house down or something. And he was there for quite a few years before he moved into a senior facility. And during those years, lots of things happened. Uh, we stripped all the wood was painted white down to the original pine. We took off the front porch. That porch was enclosed. Uh, with screen. And, uh, we took it back to the way it looked originally. And on the top of the porch there used to be a door that went from the one bedroom out onto the porch where you could sleep outside on the roof. That was all gone. So then some of the different members in the organization had, uh, different skills and interests. Ed Blackman.....was especially interested in roses.

So his idea was to start a rose garden. And each year we had a rose garden celebration, at which time, uh, another member, Hal Doerr and I, uh, designed an outdoor plaque that had slots in it for you to, uh, commemorate deceased or living people who had made contributions in the beginning. We charged \$25 for a name on the plaque. In the end, we were charging \$100 for a name on the plaque, and the money was to be used for the upkeep of the roses. Not that's your rose or your rose. Because if the rose died, then it would not be a good thing. But these were all David Austin roses. They were special roses. They were not just rose roses like we have now. Uh, and, uh, David Austin's roses that we had were available when the house was built in the 1908. So that's how we kept up the Rose garden and Ed was always the one who was responsible for it. We had each rose numbered with a name so you could learn which ones were which. The one out in front, the great big huge bush is called Cherokee Rose. And that's from the 1800s. Not that specific one, but the stock was available in that year. So in addition to that, we started a Quilters group. And in the beginning we quilted at Thelma Todd's house. She lived over here near Porter Hill and

uh, had a beautiful home that was on one of our house tours some years ago, and we would go there and quilt and quilt for, uh, making a quilt that we would auction off at the Rose Garden celebration when we honored the people who had donated money for the memorial plaque.

So as the house kind of came together a little more, we put the quilters upstairs in what's now the children's room, and that became the quilters room. And we quilt it up there every week for quite a few years until Thelma Palermo came along. She had a pizza place on La Mesa Boulevard, and she wanted to build an archival building, which she donated most of the money for....plus those of us who wanted to donate. They were charged \$250 apiece per donation. And for that, you got a lifetime membership and your name on the plaque. So there we are. Well, you finally got smart and realized that if everybody became a lifetime member, you'd have no income. So you cut out that eligibility category and you can't become a lifetime member anymore. But there are still some of us around who did become lifetime members because of that opportunity. So then the quilters moved out to the Thelma Palermo room, and they took that space up. We didn't have a lot of stuff then like it is now, a lot of stuff. It collected over the years, but they had their, what do you call them there where you quilt on the, you know, the frames set up there in the room and they would quilt weekly. And finally, the people who sort of were in charge of the quilting group were done. Donna continued, of course, she's quite a quilter. Donna Niemeyer but, uh, anyway.

Sharon: Were you a quilter also? Were you?

Carol: Oh, yes. Okay, sure.

And, uh, so, uh, we also had a man in our organization by the name of Norrie West. Norrie West was a sports writer for the newspapers, and he thought we should write a history book. So, uh, he made an outline. He assigned different people a chapter. And you wrote your chapter. And I wrote the history of Grossmont Hospital. That was my chapter. I think we still have that book there. And, and, uh, it was quite popular, and everybody did their own thing and did their own writing. And then he put it all together, and we were honored at the San Diego Library. Annually, they have a ceremony for locals who have written a book that year, and then they have a display of all those books that were written by local people. And we were all there, and we all got

medallions and the book was on display. And so that was a very special occasion based on, uh, that particular activity. So, um, let me see if I have anything else that I wrote down. Uh.

Sharon: What kind of roles have you played in the, let me say, History Center? I know you're a docent now, but before were you...

Carol: I'd been a docent since the very beginning. And in the beginning I was the only docent. I was there every week. But we finally found some other people over the years, and I didn't want to go every week. So, um, uh, basically, that's my longest contribution. Oh, I was on all the different committees and I was vice president. I never became president. Uh, but one of the members of our organization, her name was, uh, Betty Teague. They lived across the street, down a couple of houses. They were very active, uh, volunteers. And Betty belonged to a group locally in East County called Sprites. The Sprites were a grandmother, mother, daughter organization that did good things. They had fundraisers. And if you were an organization and you had a desire for something or other, you could request it and then they'd donate the monies. They doled them out. So at one time, this property, you know, was about two and a half acres and it had lemon trees on it. Lemon Grove wasn't the only one who had lemon trees. We had a lot of lemon trees. And so Betty requested some lemon trees to, uh, remind us of our earlier beginnings. And that's how you got those four lemon trees.. was by donations from the Sprites organization. Uh, and planted them. And fortunately, ...I have forgotten the lady's name who takes care of them. But she does a beautiful job, and we just, uh, cut, cut them all down a couple of weekends ago, and everybody got baskets of lemons. So that was the lemon story there. And, um, let me see then.

Uh, uh, during this time...about four years after I retired. Uh, I got a call from. Grossmont Adult School, saying that the teacher who had taught ceramics was retiring or quitting, actually quitting. And I had been retired four years. And. Could I fill in until they found someone? I'm in my 24th year and I don't think they've ever looked, but my classes have done a lot for La Mesa. Uh, we have, uh, just finished the Welcome to La Mesa sign over the Palm Avenue and La Mesa Boulevard. You know, the city sold 1444, 4 inch plaques. \$125 a piece, and it took us a couple of years to gather that up. Those are going to be mounted on the pillars on either side. And they had all through last summer to come to the Ceramic Cafe in Grossmont Center, where we did the

painting of the plaques. All but 25 people showed up, so we had 25 plaques left over. So a week before last by ceramic class went over. I have 24 students. After class, and we painted up the rest of the tiles so they could get started with a construction of these two pillars that will have all these tiles mounted on them. In addition to that, um, they have done a lot with, uh, tile walls and things in the different parks. I was a volunteer for the city of La Mesa. I was originally, uh, asked to be on the Arts Commission, and it only lasted three years because the city had hired a part time employee to oversee our activities, and they couldn't afford it anymore.

So the committee disbanded. Art Madrid said, oh, I've got just the job for you. He said, you could be on the Parks and Recreation Commission. We have an opening. And I said, well, I don't know. He said, oh, you'll love it. And it eventually became Community Services. I was on that commission for 18 years, during which time. I personally almost built that dog park myself, but I had help anyway. We built that little amphitheater where we have the summer concerts, uh, Harry Griffin Park. Um, and, uh. Oh, we did so many things. We started the Arts Alliance, where we had, uh, East County Children's Symphony, and we had readings of plays, and we had art exhibits and. Uh, we had all sorts of activities for Arts Alliance until Mark became Mayor, and when Mark became Mayor, the Arts Alliance sort of fell apart and we ... it no longer exists, which is too bad. But in the meantime, they have appointed a new Arts Commission, and I haven't seen any of the work that they're doing, but I, I hope that they will have work to show shortly. Um, I was in charge of all of the painting of the utility boxes from 70th Street all through downtown, all those places. We got art students from Helix High School to paint as many as we could.

Originally, we offered a \$700 stipend for people who painted the downtown ones. And, uh, pretty much now they're all getting a little tired looking and needing a little renovation again. We painted the murals in that pass through that goes from La Mesa Boulevard to the parking lot behind La Mesa Boulevard on Allison, and I was very active in the Centennial Committee. That was, uh, 2012. That was our 100th anniversary. I was responsible for the selection of the people who did the Lookout Park, that little park there, the Dominguez's. I chose Mary and Jesse Dominguez, who were friends from San Diego State, where I taught for a semester or two. And, uh. My class put together those mosaics that are on the little gazebo in the middle of the Outlook Park parklet. It's not a real park, it's just a parklet. So that was another one of the contributions that I had

made while we were on that commission. I was also on the Human Relations Commission for four years, and I was on the Mission Trails. Regional Park Committee representing the city of La Mesa and have resigned from that. One of the reasons is that they meet at night and I no longer drive at night. So to get down there to Mission Trails is a little iffy. So, uh, what else haven't I talked about that I oh, I was going to mention too that. I also, during all this time worked for 23 years at the county fair.

Every June was set aside for the well... Del Mar County Fair, but we changed it to the San Diego County Fair to try to be more inclusive of the different regions. And I worked for Home and Hobby, where we displayed your work, your baking, your coins, whatever your hobbies, and displayed all the work and gave prizes and so forth. And then I was an Ambassador for quite a few years, and that's more of a watch. And. Speak up if you see something unusual walking around. And in those days, they didn't allow them to take the beer out of the beer gardens, you had to drink it in the beer gardens. But the sign that said you can't take your beer out was inside the beer gardens facing the bar. You didn't know that till you got in there. And you got your beer and you started out. There's the sign. You have to drink it in lots of angst. They said, well, Los Angeles County Fair let you walk around with your beer. And so finally they decided they'd reduce that until 3 PM. But it's still a no smoking, no any kind of smoking, vaping or any other kind of smoking. Um, then in addition to that, I was very active in the arts community in the state and local. I was president of the San Diego City County Arts Educator Association and the Southern California Art Educator Association, and the State, and to raise money for ... Scholarships for our high school students. We had auctions at our state conferences, and Diane Powers from Bazaar del Mundo, Grossmont High School graduate, donated a lot of left overs to the auctions, which sold very well. And over the years, I raised \$180,000 for scholarships for art students from the whole state of California through Diane's effort. And my daughter manages the bazaar shops. So. We have lots of turnover. Any time anything breaks, we get it and we fix it if we can and make use of it in some way. So with the fairgrounds and the art associations and the city and all of these things over the years, the Historical Society, I've been, you know, very active and, uh, for, for those years I was the Grand Marshal of the parade this last. Uh, Flag Day Parade. And, uh, I must say, though, that first on the list was Joe Musgrove. He's our Grossmont graduate, and he has a mural on the side near the administration building now, and he was first choice. But you know what? He had a ball game that day and he couldn't come. So I was number two. So I got to be the

Grand Marshal. And over the years, um, these are some of the Historical Society, um. Lookout avenues where I was honored for different things. A lot of the things I've mentioned to you already, and, uh, let me see.

Sharon: So you're still at your age. You're still volunteering for everything. What drives you to want to continue?

Carol: Well, all of that... Um, there's a there's a saying. "If only"... "If only I hadn't". Or, "if only I would have". Or, "if only I could have". So I didn't want to be an "if only". I wanted to do it. And be there and be part of it. And when I was took my vows at the sorority, uh, it was to commit your activities to the community in which you are placed for the joy of service thereby bestowed. And I took that vow seriously. And I have tried in as many ways as I can to accomplish those activities. These are just some promo pieces I paint scarves. I, uh oh, I was a founder of the Creative Stitchery Guild in 1970, and we meet monthly and we create stitchery that is creative, not counted cross stitch. And these are some of the bracelet I made. I put out a couple of things here to show you of some of the kinds of things over the years that I've oh, that get me that scoop and that little black pot. So.. I taught jewelry and metalwork, and I created and I always tried to incorporate some kind of a sewing or stitching technique in my, uh, assemblage. Like this has little buckle back. And then this is a pot that's been burnished, polished, and then, uh, decorated with the same colored slip over the polished and then pit fired and in a pit firing. And we do some pit firing back here occasionally. Uh, you put all the pots on a screen in the pit, and then you cover it over with dirt. If you have cedar wood, that's good.

But cow pies are also good. Mm. And if in the real world, you might go up to Julian or somewhere and to the pasture and try to find dried cow pies, because they burned with a very intense heat. You put them over there and after a certain amount of heat has been, uh, uh, taken off the wood, you put dirt over it and it smolders. And it that used to be white and it turns everything black, and that's called pit firing. So, um. We have done that occasionally down here. You haven't looked, but we have our own park down here. We built a park, the backyard. It is a park, and we have a fire pit and a waterfall and grass and gardens. And it's not in the best of condition right now because of all the rain. But we enjoy it, and we go all the way down to the football field, and we have about 50 yards from the first 50 yards. We used to have a little bleacher down there where you

could go and sit and watch all the activities. And of course, the kids both graduated from Helix and. So it's. It's out there. It's getting to the end and wondering what to do with all this stuff, you know.

Sharon: Mhm.

Carol: But I'm trying to find homes for some of the things that. People will appreciate, as I said, like that painting I'm hoping to give to the House of Norway in Balboa Park because it is of the fjords and. Well, the other things. So. Yeah. So can I answer anything?

Sharon: So I guess what.. what do you see as the role of history and the role for the La Mesa History Center?

Carol: Well, I guess I wasn't really pleased when you decided to change the name. But, you know, the San Diego Historical Society has changed their name to their the San Diego History Society Association. I think it's been a good thing because it puts emphasis on the materials you have to share. And that's really, I think, why you're there is to share all the things we've learned and the activities we've, uh, things we've accomplished for the future. And as young families come in, I think more and more they'll be interested in the historical part of the city because it's small, you know, that's what we like about it. I never realized that I'd end up in La Mesa, where I started so many years ago, not knowing why I was here. Really. And, uh, it just it just worked out. I met the right people. Uh, they helped me along. They supported me. They offered me different opportunities. And I think, uh, at one time, I sort of was Mrs. La Mesa. I gave all the tours of the City Hall, and the third grade curriculum has a community theme, so I would take them to different parts of the, of the city hall and show them what's done here and what's done there.

And if they wanted to get a job, where to apply for that. And, and Mark wasn't married yet, and, uh, so he would come too and he would sit and talk with them and we'd have a great time with those third graders. They'd come by bus, and then they'd walk over to Vons and they'd have a shopping tour on how to walk around the edges and not go down the middle. So anyway, I think that there's a place for the Association. And I'm so happy that there are people like you who are interested in seeing it proceed. And, uh. I

guess if, uh, I had. Something basically to say, uh, I don't like the dirt so much. The gravel. And, uh, I know the grass was a heck of a mess, and that was all weeds anyway. And it took a lot to keep it up, which we never really were able to do very well. But, uh, I, I just don't kind of like the look of it so much that way with just the gravel and, you know, you tried to replace some roses, which is good. And, um. Keep up the interior as best we can as as it was. And, uh.

Sharon: What happened to all those old roses? Did they all die off or..

Carol: I think they were neglected for quite a period of time. Yeah, I think they just kind of died. Well, once Ed was kind of gone and was no longer capable of being responsible. There wasn't really anybody to take his place. Okay. And. So. I would like to see you plant a some Barbara Karst Bougainvillea. That's the city plant... in those two big flat. Uh, corner plots that you have sort of a blue vine growing. It would be nice to have some beautiful bougainvillea there, and they're very prolific. And they sell them right down here at Home Depot. When Mark was installed as Mayor, I bought him one. I don't know whether it's still alive, but if you live in La Mesa, you need a Barbara Karst Bougainvillea. It's part of it... It's our flower. Okay. So.... I told you about Norrie West. Well, Norrie was the early Jim Newland. He was the one who started writing books about La Mesa. And Jim certainly has carried through with that. And if it hadn't been for him, I don't think we'd be where we are now, because he really has been the backbone of the society for quite a few years. So I hope he continues, even though he lives in Kensington.

Sharon: Right, right.

Carol: I've never met his wife. Have you?

Sharon: Mhm. She comes to a lot of the events.. she does. She is very low key.

Carol: Maybe. I just don't recognize her because I try to go to the events. I notice that you're going to be at uh. Where is it? The not North Park, but, uh.

Sharon: Rolando Street.

Carol: Rolando. Yeah. Street fair coming up in April. And....

Sharon: Yeah, that's one of the things that, um. Jim, I think has really been pushing is to talk about the greater La Mesa area that it's.. it's more than just we're more than just the La Mesa History Center. We're the greater La Mesa area.

Carol: Well, maybe they'll incorporated someday. Like we got Rolando. Right. We didn't used to go across 70th Street. Uh, then they incorporated that hunk of Rolando into La Mesa. So. But I like the size of the town I had. Hate to see it. I'm not too pleased with the building going up there where the police department used to be. It sort of cuts off the the sunlight and the light and it sort of dramatic. I wasn't too fond of what went in down here at McClellan either, but they seemed to be doing okay. I guess they want \$1 million for most of those places. \$700,000 to \$1 million. Can you imagine that?

Sharon: No I can't,..

Carol: We only paid \$10,500. Oh my gosh. Yeah, yeah, those were the days.

Sharon: Yep. I really like your.. your comment that "if only". That that's... that's a good maxim to go by. And so I would imagine what you want to be remembered are, is that you lived up to that. You didn't..."If only". It sounds like you just have gone all out and...

Carol: Well, you know, I still have 24 students and they really keep me going because they, uh, they're very complimentary. And some of them I had in high school, except they're 70 years old now, like the little girl who was selling Girl Scout cookies out in front of Vons yesterday. I said to her, well, my daughter and I used to sell Girl Scout cookies. I said they were \$0.50 a box when we sold them. And I said, and she's 70 years old now. Now they're \$6 a box.

Sharon: Yeah, yeah.

Steven: I have a question for Carol.

Sure. Um, I'm curious if you and your family would attend movies at the Helix Theater and maybe what was your experience like with that cultural, you know, institution here in

La Mesa? And then when they opened up Grossmont Center and there was a new theater there, maybe if you guys went there. But what was your experience with watching movies here in La Mesa?

Carol: I didn't quite understand the movie...

Sharon: The movie theater, I think is now...

Steven: the Helix Theater.

Carol: The Helix. Yes. We used to go there. Yeah.

Steven: What was your experience like? Did you, you know, in terms of maybe recollections or key movies that were sort of moving to you that were.

Carol: Well, what was wonderful about the Helix Theater was right there where the, uh, coffee shop is now, the on the corner of La Mesa Boulevard and, uh, University right there where Starbucks is. And it was a Quonset hut, movie theater. But there was a man there who owned that theater, and you dropped your kids off and you knew they were going to be safe the whole time. He watched him, he made sure they behaved themselves. And he was wonderful. It was it was such a pleasure because he was really a treasure. And, uh, I don't know, whatever happened to the theater. We used to have a drive in up here, too. You know where the 99 cent store is? That was a drive in theater. And for a while when they closed, I had the neon sign in the driveway down here. It was in disrepair and it was just lying there and no one wanted it. So I had my son in his truck go over and take it.... well. I kept it for a long time, thinking that maybe a neon museum might be interested in it, but nobody wanted it. So, uh. It's too bad because that was a wonderful spot too. But the Helix Theatre actually started, you know, down there on La Mesa Boulevard where there's a what is it, a hair? I think it used to be a costume shop. Yeah. Different kinds of costumes.

Sharon: Mhm.

Carol: Uh, but then it's not been that for a long, long time. Well I am sort of sorry to see a little bit about La Mesa. I'm not in favor of, uh.

Uh, what I want to say. Dentist's office. Uh. I'd like it (the Village) to be retail. Retail. And there's, you know, there's so much other stuff down there, financial aid and all. I can't even think of it. And the one that's the worst is that one they put up Whissel. I think it's called Whissel. It's a realty. And it took wall to wall space between the Pizza place, there's Johnny B's and then there's pizza. And that was a wonderful when we moved here. Little indoor mall. And there was a pet store and a knit shop and a jewelry store and an antique store, and they all....the center was open and they all had their own doors. And you could go in these little shops. And we had always hoped it would be something like that that would come back there. And then this guy, he reconstructs the whole building in this sort of zoomy looking thing and. Well, I don't know. I don't think we need that many realtors down in La Mesa. But, you know, restaurants, they seem to come and go and that's. That's fine. We had a wonderful bakery.

Sharon: Yes.

Carol: Oh, my. It was delicious.

And they've remodeled the front of that too, so it doesn't look like it used to where they had windows with their bakery displays. And you'd go in and there was a cook, uh, cookie tin canister, and they'd always give you a free cookie. You know, the children, if you had a child with you, you'd get a free cookie. I mean, it was nice. It was a little small town stuff. And next to that was a place called Madame Crete. Madame Crete. Oh, she had the most elegant, beautiful clothes for wealthy women. And, uh, she was very special, too. But then we had a quilting shop in there for a while. It was very nice. You know the furrier Rudy. What was his last name? Rudy. Something. Anyway, they fell in hard times because furs became not a good thing. And they opened a quilt shop here. The daughters did, and that was a nice addition, I thought. But I'm not so much in favor of the non-retail businesses.

Sharon: Um, uh..

Carol: Where you have to find a place to park and go in and. Do your business and come out. So if I can tell you anything else?

Sharon: I think you've touched on an awful lot. Did you have any other questions?
(question to Steven) That you wanted to ask.

Steven: You've been here, you know, since 57, 67. Here in this home.

Carol: 57 in this house, 67 in La Mesa.

Steven: And obviously saw the growth of, you know, Helix High School and this community here. Um, one of the things that I've observed as a resident here for a decade or more is that in the early 60s, the architectural theme that was sort of prominent was mid-century modern, like the whole civic center and the police station were developed in this sort of mid-century modern, sort of a little bit, you know, optimistic, forward looking type of architectural style. Did you have any thoughts about that during that period when you actually lived here?

Carol: I'm happy with the way things are. I like the, uh, smallness of the city hall. Uh, I suppose the fire department needed to enlarge. And, you know, we used to have when the library was up above there along University, next to it was an art gallery. You remember then there was a little theater there, right. And the Lamplighters used to put on plays. And actually out in front of that library was where they had buried this time capsule. But they lost it. They couldn't find the 50 year time capsule. So when we built the Lookout, we solicited ideas for the little Lookout Park. And one of them.... that was a huge neon arrow 12ft tall, pointing there. And that was where we were to bury the time capsule so they wouldn't lose it. I didn't choose that one, but I thought it was kind of tongue in cheek. It was cute, but we had the time capsule inside that gazebo now, so. Anyway, we have, uh, another term in my ceramic class coming up, starting this next week. 24 students and, uh, every, every day, every week. It's just once a week. Thursdays. Uh, I have a new lesson. And in 24 years, times 32 lessons, each one different. It's not like high school where you get a group of kids and they go away and you get a new group and you repeat what you had. It's not like that. It has to be new and different and exciting, and it's a challenge. It's always a challenge to think about what you're going to do and how you're going to do it. We used to live next door to the Orsborn family. He was the. Assistant Fire Chief here. His name is on the outside plaque up there in North La mesa. They lived next door, Bill Orsborn and his brother. So we've known a lot of people. I sort of miss Art Madrid. I haven't seen him in a long time.

Sharon: No, I'm going to try to track him down.

Carol: And I know he was writing a book. I saw him while he was writing it. He was going to classes, I think, at Grossmont College, helping him. Uh, and he lived up above us here on the hill in this other tract up there. Terra. Uh, but he was all by himself. And so he, you know, lives there on Lake Murray Boulevard in a very nice community on the east side of the boulevard before you get to north La Mesa. How can you be so interested in and not interested, you know.... or there was a lot of criticism, I guess, and it's hard to take. But then he lost his lady friend. You know, she was a Pharmacist at Costco. She died very suddenly. Sad.

Sharon: Hmm'hmm.

Carol: Well, it's going to happen to all of us, isn't it? I got three cards back this year from Christmas. Uh. No response. Whatever it says, nobody here. So I don't know whether they're gone or moved or what's happened.

Sharon: Yeah.

Carol: That's how you find out.

Sharon: You have to live life to the fullest and have no regrets.

Carol: Yes, but, you know, the city did allow the Foothills Art Association that had that little gallery to rent. The Foothills... It's the Foothills Art Gallery there in that little Chinese building that used to be the post office. You know, it was across the street. Original post office. Yeah, well, I've been there at the Adult Center now for quite a few years has seen... Kathy Tinsley would be a good person. Is she on your list? Tinsley. She used to be on the board for many years, and then she became the, uh, director of the Adult Enrichment Center. And then she became the president of the La Mesa Woman's Club when it was 100 years old. And by the way, the La Mesa Woman's Club was the original seed for our rose garden. They gave us \$200 in the very beginning to get it started. So they've been a supporter of your organization? Um. Well, I was there one day when someone was giving them a tour. Some other docent, I didn't know her, but...

Sharon: Yeah.

Carol: And the one you have right now is pretty nice. I like the exhibit in the exhibit hall, um, you know, and, uh.

Sharon: Mhm. Nan Coutts yeah.

Carol: Yeah, Coutts. That's right.

Sharon: Uh, I really appreciate you taking the time to.

Carol: Oh, well..,

Sharon: share some of your memories of...

Carol: Oh, yeah. A lot of memories, a lot of people.

Sharon: Right? Well, again, Thank you.

Carol: Well. You're welcome.