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**Session I**  
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**[Begin Tape 4641. Begin Session I.]**

**CHELSEA ARSENEAULT:** Alright today is Wednesday July thirteenth, 2016 and I'm here with Mr. Hal McMillin at the Imperial Calcasieu Museum in Lake Charles [Louisiana]. And Mr. Hal I have your list of accomplishments right here and they're quite lengthy. You were the Westlake city councilman from 1995 through 1999, police juror, vice president of the police juror, president of the police juror, and the list goes on. So we'll definitely get more into like, your work and your work history, but first I have everyone just state their name, full name for the record.

**HAL MCMILLIN:** [00:30] Yeah and that's a good thing to do. Usually whenever I do an interview I always state my name and spell it, also.

**ARSENEAULT:** Yes.

**MCMILLIN:** Because it's Hal, H-A-L. And then McMillin is M-C-M-I-L-L-I-N. I always say like penicillin, ends in I-N because a lot of people try to put an O-N or O-N stuff like this. But family name's McMillin. Very proud of that name. My parents originated from up in North Louisiana and moved to this area in 1955, so I'm excited about my history and being a part of this area basically my entire life. I've, you know, I was born here in Lake Charles and I'm

sixty years old. Be sixty-one in November.

**ARSENEAULT:**      What's your birthday?

**MCMILLIN:**      [01:15] November eighteenth, 1955. And it's been a great place to grow up in. God has blessed me that he let me grow up here in southwest Louisiana. A place that I truly love. I mean if you . . . A young man of my interest and character coming up. The hunting and fishing, all the things with the outdoors and growing up in a family that really enjoyed that. It was tremendous to be right here in southwest Louisiana. You know, we have saltwater fishing, and freshwater fishing, ducks, geese, doves, rabbits, everything that you could possibly want. And I always say the best food and of course the prettiest women in the world right here in southwest Louisiana. So it's a . . . it's quite an honor to be here; grow up here. It's my home. I love it. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else, so.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [02:07] What brought your parents from . . . Where in North Louisiana?

**MCMILLIN:**      My dad was a . . . Yeah my dad was from Jonesville, Louisiana. And he was a hometown plumbing contractor. And my mom, the way I got interested in politics, she was the city clerk for the city of Westlake back in the 70s and I used to always go . . . from the 60s to the 70s. Late 60s to the 70s. My dad wasn't a guy that would like to put on a coat and tie and go to conventions so I would always follow my mom to conventions, the Louisiana Municipal Association back when I was young. So I've always had an interest in politics. And I guess being that November birthday, a Scorpio male, I've always been a leader and I've always led most

everything that I've done.

So that was some of the history of my parents moving here, us growing up, Westlake, the hometown that I grew up in tremendous. We were probably three to four thousand people back in the days of growing up and it was the greatest place in the world. I mean you could . . . The summer times were filled with bicycles with a baseball glove on it heading up to the recreation center and the swimming pool. An easy, easy life. My dad was as I said a hometown plumbing contractor, and my mom was city clerk for city of Westlake. And she worked at banks and stuff like . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**     [03:28] What were their names?

**MCMILLIN:**         Harold McMillin and Dalton McMillin. My mom had a guy's name.  
Dalton Edith.

**ARSENEAULT:**     Her maiden?

**MCMILLIN:**         [03:35] She was a [Welch?]. Her parents were from Oakdale. Louisiana roots all the way, but they moved here like I say from Jonesville. We grew up in a family of . . . I had an older brother seventeen years older than me. I had another big brother ten years older than me, a sister eight years older than me.

**ARSENEAULT:**     So you were the baby?

**MCMILLIN:**            I was a baby, definitely. Spoiled rotten. I had . . . My nearest brother graduated from high school in '63, and I graduated in 1973 from Westlake High and then later went to McNeese [State University], but the interest of your older brother from the 60s and the little baby brother who was spoiled rotten from the 70s, we were . . . We're pretty different, but we've grown to really love each other and enjoy each other's company.

[04:24] One of the common bonds we had is we're both pretty big duck hunters. I would say that the McMillin family, my son, his son, the family we have, when it comes to duck hunting we would rank right up there with the Robertson's of North Louisiana. We're just as serious about it. And started guiding in early 70s at the Chateaux Charles. A lot of things that tied me to this community, tied me both to Westlake and to Mossville. It's been fun life. I've had a great time and I've always tried to I guess God given gift is I'm a communicator and a people person. So that's where the things that I do and things that I enjoy in life have kind of combined all that together to put me where we're at with this whole police jury stuff.

And having . . . Going to Westlake High and S.P. Arnett and elementary school there, too. A number of the kids that we grew up with all the way through life are still in the community and we see them every day. Whether it's at the ballfield, whether our kids or grandkids now, or the grocery store, you run across those people. Westlake's a very very good hometown. And Moss Bluff, although not incorporated in Westlake, had a lot of the same common things that Westlake had. Big families that knew each other and we all went to school together. So, but those are some of the questions I'll let you ask.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [05:50] Oh, sure.

**MCMILLIN:**            Where do we need to go?

**ARSENEAULT:**      Those are all great. That's great information, but your . . . just further going back, kind of your origins and how your family got here. What were your grandparents' names?

**MCMILLIN:**            [05:59] Oh, my grandmother . . . I never knew my grandfather on my dad's side, but my grandmother, her name is [Cattie?] McMillin. And my dad had a bunch of brothers. He had five brothers and three sisters. So all the first cousins in that part, when we would go up to Jonesville we were all close and we still stayed close. We still have a family reunion. So that's on my dad's side. My mom was an only child. So we didn't have any . . . but my grandmother on that side, Bessie Welch and Charlie Welch who lived in Oakdale and remember trips of my childhood going up there and having a big gardens, and fig trees, and picking . . . digging up potatoes out of the ground. Just really good childhood memories.

And then road trips going . . . leaving . . . when you were five, six years old to drive to Jonesville which was probably about two and half, three hours away, was a big trip. Or go to Oakdale which was an hour away was a . . . he'd load up the car and head out that way. That was in the days of young kids and no seatbelts and heading down the highway and big adventures throughout there. So we . . . a really good core group of happiness in a childhood. I had . . . I never wanted for anything. Although we weren't wealthy my dad was a very hard worker as a plumbing contractor.

And that's one of the things too I guess with the people of Mossville primarily being black people and Westlake having blacks and whites. My dad had a guy that worked with him named

Ernest Bates. And the Bates family was a very good black family from Westlake. Ernest was like a brother to me. So and my mom, with her working, and my dad working, we had a lady that would come in and take care of me during the day. A black lady. Whether a domestic . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      Do you remember her name?

**MCMILLIN:**      [07:59] Oh, there was three or four of them. Yeah. The first one was named Hazel. And Hazel had a daughter named Katie. And Katie was my first girlfriend ever. So my first girlfriend ever happened to be a little black girl back in the 60s, but that's okay because that's the way it should be in America. And I hope that America heals; that we can all be one as people. But, yeah I had Ms. Thelma, Ms. Hazel, Elvina, I got to say each one of them brought something different to the table. Ms. Hazel was a very good disciplinarian and she had Katie with her. Always liked when Katie would come we had a good time playing together, stuff like this. Ms. Perkins, Ms. Thelma Perkins, was probably my favorite. That's why I love soul food today. She was one of the best cooks ever. I loved . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [08:54] So she would cook when she . . .?

**MCMILLIN:**      Oh, she would . . . Yeah would cook lunch and Mom and Dad both come home for lunch. And then we would go . . . As kids we'd go to the recreation center, which I didn't live a block or two from. They had a swimming pool. We'd go there . . . It opened at nine o'clock in the morning, stay there until noon. It closed from noon to one, then we'd go back at one o'clock. And that was an intermixing of black and white kids playing together. Back in the

60s and 70s we all played basketball together, we all played ping pong together, we didn't have any prejudices in that era. So it was fun to have a lot of friends and grow up with that. But we'd always come home for lunch and that's where I got spoiled to . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      What kind of things did she cook?

**MCMILLIN:**      [09:35] Smothered pork chop, smothered chicken, beef tongue, tripe, fried chicken . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      Now what is tripe, are those of . . .?

**MCMILLIN:**      Tripe is a cow stomach. And you use . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      And how would she cook it?

**MCMILLIN:**      [09:46] She would boil it . . . and salt and pepper. In fact, I still love it to this day, but my wife won't let me cook it in my house.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Why not I wonder?

**MCMILLIN:**      It stinks when you cook it.

**ARSENEAULT:**      It smells?

**MCMILLIN:**            [Laughs] It's got an aroma. It's got a . . . I like the way it smells. My wife's like, "Get that stinky . . ."

**ARSENEAULT:**      It's like cabbage. Some people love it and some people hate it.

**MCMILLIN:**            Yeah, yeah some people love it, tripe. Tripe has an . . . It's odiferous.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [10:05] Distinctive odor.

**MCMILLIN:**            But yeah so I guess that's some of the basics of growing up. I always loved soul food. I mean if I see a restaurant where there's serving smothered anything, smothered pork chop, smothered chicken, rice . . . red beans and rice and gravy. That's good south . . . Southern food and I was spoiled with that. Now, my mom could cook, too. These ladies were very good.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Do you remember anything about . . . Let's see, you were graduating high school in '73.

**MCMILLIN:**            Yes I did.

**ARSENEAULT:**      What do you remember about integration?

**MCMILLIN:**            [10:39] Well, let's go back. We had some rough times. And there was



some people that pushed against us. I didn't . . . I guess really I never saw color in my life because I was around it all my life. Black and white people to me, I never had any type of prejudice because I guess really I loved everybody, and still do. In junior high school we had policeman in our halls because it was starting to have some integration.

**ARSENEAULT:**      What junior high was it?

**MCMILLIN:**          S.P. Arnett Junior High School.

**ARSENEAULT:**      S.P. [. . .?]

**MCMILLIN:**          [11:13] [?] Junior High School, in Westlake. Yeah. And they were just bringing in . . . They had Westlake blacks that lived in Westlake, and they had blacks that lived in Mossville. And they were bringing more blacks from Mossville to integrate Westlake Junior High and Westlake High School. And there was some racial tension. They had some negativity of people that didn't want to see that happen. I remember some of those incidences. I saw some fights in the halls, I saw some police department folks having to be there. There was tension. But you could be a part of that tension, or not be a part of that tension. And I was never in the middle of that. It's . . . Those were my friends and I guess I really didn't get involved in it. I saw young white guys drive up to the school with rebel flags on their cars and kind of incite the black guys. And there were some black guys that were not happy to be there and didn't want to be there, and they would push back. So it caused a tension in that era, but we got through that and it made us stronger.

[12:22] Actually, on into high school, at Westlake High School, we had some of the same stuff when I got there. And in 1973 we had a lot of racial tension in Westlake with the integration that was going on and stuff. Our homecoming for the football game got canceled. And we didn't have a homecoming queen in 1973 because there was racial tension in the air. But that was a few people. That was not the majority of the people. I can tell you the majority of people of Mossville and Westlake . . . like is say Ernest who worked for my dad as a plumber assistant, he was like a brother to me. We did a lot of duck hunting. And I'd have extra ducks, or geese, or whatever it was . . . I'd bring it to the Bates family. I was like part of the family. I never felt ill at ease going into anybody's house, black or white, at any point in time like it was a problem. I guess there was people both sides, both white and black, that would . . . Could have problems with that in that era, but it didn't affect the McMillin household. It wasn't the way I was raised and it didn't affect us in any way.

**ARSENEAULT:**     [13:31] So you were raised kind of in that environment?

**MCMILLIN:**     I was raised in an environment that you respect people.

**ARSENEAULT:**     What other values did your parents kind of instill in you?

**MCMILLIN:**     Well, they were just good people. They were down to earth people. Treat people the way you want to be treated; the golden rule. Do unto others . . . that was always . . . and we would go to church and I . . . little things that you think back on. Childhood . . . I remember as a little kid being a little bit . . . Probably I had ADHD. They didn't know what it

was back then but I was a hyper kid.

**ARSENEAULT:**     You were active?

**MCMILLIN:**        [14:10] I was active. I'd remember my dad just kind of taking my knuckles, and just kind of squeezing them, and just a little bit of pressure.

**ARSENEAULT:**     Was that his punishment?

**MCMILLIN:**        He'd just kind of calm me down, just to slow me down a little bit.

**ARSENEAULT:**     Yeah.

**MCMILLIN:**        [14:12] He'd just grab . . . and do that to my grandson every now and again to just say hey, calm down a little. Just to get my attention a little bit. He wasn't a strict disciplinarian. He was a really good guy. In fact, my older brother was probably more the disciplinarian than my dad was, but he was a hard working guy that enjoyed life. And the things that he enjoyed crossed over into our values. He enjoyed . . . We had rabbit dogs and we'd go rabbit hunting almost every weekend. We'd go perch fishing around the salt water barrier. Catch tons of fish. He was my best friend. So that was . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**     So who took care of the discipline? It was mostly your mom did it and your . . .?

**MCMILLIN:**            [15:04] I was probably . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      You weren't a bad child, I'm sure.

**MCMILLIN:**            I wasn't a bad child. I wasn't a bad child, but I didn't have to be disciplined a whole lot. But I knew right from wrong. I was taught right from wrong. And did I do some wrong sometimes? Yeah. Yeah we all did growing up. I mean there's things that you do you think, "Wow man. If I'd have got caught doing that I'd have probably got in trouble." But that's the growth things through there. But I guess really the core values too, is family's important, number one. Our family was number one. And there was always . . . I always felt loved. Being the baby I was always spoiled. My mom would scratch my back. She was probably the world's greatest back scratcher.

So yeah the core values of growing up, I look back where I'm at in my life and what . . . the time that we grew up in. I wouldn't want to ever grow up in any other era. It was perfect. I mean we . . . from the television shows to life in general. Getting on your bicycle and heading down to the ballfield, playing right there at the recreation center was two blocks from my house. We'd play little league ball. I mean we were so anxious to play we'd go help them rake the fields and line the fields to get ready for the game that night. And it was . . . the swimming pool was right there. We had a lady up at the recreation center, Ms. [Hoban?], she was like a second momma to us all up there. And she didn't put up with . . . she didn't tolerate any kind of racial issues at that recreation center.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [16:38] So it was an integrated pool?

**MCMILLIN:**            [16:40] Yeah. Integrated pool, integrated recreation center, integrated baseball team. In fact, one of my dear buddies he still talks about that. He says, “Hey man back when times were tough and there was integration things,” he said . . . he always says, “Hal,” he said, “you were a guy that never played that.” He said, “You were my always friend all the way through.” And I did. I mean I just . . . Just the way I was raised. There wasn’t black white issues at our house, so.

**ARSENEAULT:**      It sounds like your dad was kind of a role model to you as well. Did you have any other role models, or?

**MCMILLIN:**            Well my big brother. He was a hard working guy also. He . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      What was his name?

**MCMILLIN:**            [17:17] His name’s Mickey.

**ARSENEAULT:**      What did he do?

**MCMILLIN:**            He’s a . . . Went to McNeese, graduated in forestry, and but he was a . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      Outdoorsman?

**MCMILLIN:**            Outdoorsman. He was a big hunter so when my dad wouldn’t take me

hunting I could always go with my big brother. Now what I didn't realize until later in life, he was taking me so he could shoot my limit also [laughs].

**ARSENEAULT:**      [17:36] He was taking your ducks?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah he was taking my ducks. He was shooting my ducks.

**ARSENEAULT:**      You were just there as a warm body?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah I was a warm body so he could kill a few more ducks [both laugh].

**ARSENEAULT:**      What is the limit? Has it changed?

**MCMILLIN:**      It changed through the years.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [17:46] It changed through the . . .

**MCMILLIN:**      It always changes, yeah, but yeah I say that. I give him a hard time about that.

**ARSENEAULT:**      That's funny.

**MCMILLIN:**      But he taught me.

**ARSENEAULT:**     Yeah.

**MCMILLIN:**        He taught me a lot of things about the outdoors. I mean . . . and there's no . . . especially neighborhood kids. We had a great neighborhood with a whole bunch of kids and I was right in the mix with all those guys from playing plastic ball and bat in the backyard to football and in somebody's yard. We were always doing something. A core group of kids. In fact, one of my closest friends, a young man named Mark Moore, him and I are still very close today. We were raised together. And I was a bit of a scoundrel at times. We would . . . I say scoundrel, I was fun loving I was not afraid . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**     [18:25] Mischievous?

**MCMILLIN:**        Well, to a degree. We'd . . . I'm fortunate I didn't kill Mark because he was like my younger brother.

**ARSENEAULT:**     What kind of things would y'all get into?

**MCMILLIN:**        [18:33] Well I once shot a bow and arrow straight up in the air . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**     Landed in somebody's eyeball?

**MCMILLIN:**        And the arrow . . . No, the arrow came very close to hitting him. I mean it missed him by two inches. He tells that story a lot. There was one incident when I was probably

ten and he was probably eight that . . . when the Santa Claus issue came up I . . . he was one of the first guys I went to visit with about it, so.

**ARSENEAULT:**      To tell him there was none?

**MCMILLIN:**      [18:56] Well I think there is one. I'm not saying that.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Oh, I see.

**MCMILLIN:**      I don't want to go on record with that. There still is . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      So there is a Santa Claus?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yes, absolutely.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [19:02] I see. I see.

**MCMILLIN:**      [Laughs] But at ten years old you may have . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      You may have think otherwise.

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah so . . .



**ARSENEAULT:**      That is funny.

**MCMILLIN:**      [19:10] Yeah. He's a great guy. I love Mark. Yeah we have lasting friendships through the neighborhood and stuff like that.

**ARSENEAULT:**      So y'all played ball, you went to the swimming pool, and this is when you were ten? When you were young?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah. Yeah we played in each other's houses, we . . . it was just a neighborhood. And I think about that today. Often times kids say, "There's nothing to do." I don't ever remember in my lifetime as a kid growing up in Westlake in my neighborhood that I ever said there was nothing to do. And I guess I was the kid that was always coming up with ideas for things to do. We were . . . They paved the street in the 60s. I had a lemonade stand. I made a killing. I was always a bit of an entrepreneur in different things with that. We had a trolley in the backyard that we used to . . . it was kind of like a zip line. We did zip lines way before zip lines were popular. I would put on carnival shows and charge local kids five cents to get in or something. I was always coming up with some scheme, or idea, or something to do something, but . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [20:16] There was no time to be bored?

**MCMILLIN:**      No. There was no time to be bored. We had a lot of fun. We were always . . . Mark was really mechanically inclined and he was really good with flying these . . . He used

to have these prop airplanes on a string that you would fly. And we would fly airplanes, we would do racecar sets, we would . . . There was always something to do. Play baseball. Pass many hours of plastic ball and bat in the backyard or homerun derby. My gosh, basketball. What . . . all the sports. Just according to what season it was, what we was doing. And then of course you'd get into hunting season and fishing season. We loved that. And growing up here in southwest Louisiana and having the opportunity to have all the rivers and lakes and stuff, as soon as we got old enough to get boats and stuff . . . I was blessed. I was . . . My dad was a successful plumbing contractor, and my mom worked. So when I turned fifteen years old they had just built a new house. And that's a small town of Westlake, okay? They just built a new house and it had a swimming pool in the center of it. So we had a house with a swimming pool, I had my own car, had my own . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [21:23] At fifteen?

**MCMILLIN:**          At fifteen, yeah.

**ARSENEAULT:**      What was it?

**MCMILLIN:**          It was a Pontiac Grand Am, nineteen . . . well I had a Dodge Carnet first, but then for . . . when I got to be a senior . . . that was kind of the most fun years 1972, '73. But I had a 1973 Pontiac Grand Am, brand new. Great car. Wish I still had it. Wish I would have took care of it [laughs], but had a ski boat. We skied on the river all the time. Had a camping trailer. We had all the toys. But here's one thing with me, although I had all that stuff, I was never

stingy with that stuff, okay? We always . . . I was always friendly, so this is . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [22:06] You wanted everybody to be having a good time?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah. Everybody have a good time. So this is one of the things one of the teachers . . . a guy named Mr. [Opry?] once told me. And when I went to Westlake High School in 1971, because I had all these toys to play with, the senior class of 1971 kind of took this young sophomore and kind of adopted me. So I ran with the seniors. Because I . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [22:29] So like, "Ooh we could go on the lake."

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah because we'll go skiing and we can . . . Hey, Hal's got a boat, Hal's got this, Hal's got a car, we can load up and go to the Astros games or whatever we'd do. So that was fun. So I remember him saying he said, "I got to Westlake in 1971," he said, "I thought you were a senior and you didn't graduate." So in 1972 that group of guys, Larry [?] and the Steve [Germans?] and all them, we were all friends. We all did things, and in 1972 I didn't graduate again. That guy said, "Man this kid must be a remedial student or something."

**ARSENEAULT:**      You mean held back?

**MCMILLIN:**      [23:03] Yeah. But I actually . . . My year to graduate was 1973. And finally when I got to be a senior in '73 I hardly knew those guys. I had to get acquainted with the class of '73.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Like, oh man.

**MCMILLIN:**      But we quickly . . . we got a bunch of good buddies and friends. In fact . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      I was going to ask what you did for fun in high school, but it sounds like you just . . . outdoor stuff.

**MCMILLIN:**      [23:20] Oh, we was . . . yeah we was . . . kind of the life of the party. We had a lot of fun. Yeah. We would go camping in Sam Houston State Park, we would water ski on the river every day. I mean we had a sixteen foot [Washata?] ski boat with a walk through windshield and a sixty horse Johnson. And got to be a pretty good water skier because we did it every day. We could slalom and had a lot of fun on the river. And had a lot of good times.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Did you ever see any gators out there? Just curious.

**MCMILLIN:**      Gators and snakes, yeah. It was a really funny story about a guy that . . . I thought it was a duck it was swimming with its head up. And I kind of skied over toward it, it was a great big water moccasin swimming the river. And the guy driving the boat slowed down, so when he slowed down . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [24:05] You fell on your . . .?

**MCMILLIN:**      It was . . . I was starting to go back in the water and I'm screaming, "Go!"

Go! Go!” And then he sees it’s a snake and he takes the boat and circles over it, takes a boat paddle kills the snake, puts the snake in the boat, picks it up on the boat paddle, throws it in the water, and I’m still in the water. I’m screaming at this guy. I still haven’t forgiven him. Gary Thibodaux. Every time I see him we talk about that snake incident [laughs]. But yeah we had a blast in high school. It . . .

**ARSENEAULT:** Did you do any extracurricular activities? Sports or anything like that?

**MCMILLIN:** [24:33] I actually ended up playing on the state champion First Baptist church league basketball team. And here’s the reason why. I went out for high school basketball and my hair about as long as his. A little bit long for 1971, ’72.

**ARSENEAULT:** Was that the style then?

**MCMILLIN:** It was the Beatles style that was coming . . . It was the 70s. So having . . . but the coaches of that era wanted you to be clean cut. And I went to basketball practice as a sophomore and Coach Billy [Coughlan’s?], who’s now a great friend of mine, Billy and I are close, but he looked at me and he said, “McMillin,” he said, “I want you to get that haircut, son. Have it done by practice tomorrow.” And I said, “Yes, sir. I will.” I went down to the local barbershop [Poussons?] and it was packed. And I wasn’t able to get my haircut because it . . . so I go back to practice the next day. And Billy [Coughlan?] says, “McMillin!” I said, “Yes, sir.” He said, “Didn’t I tell you to get that haircut?” I’m like, “Yes, sir. I’m going to get it cut.” I said, “I went to [Poussons?] and the line was long and . . .” I didn’t get to finish my statement. He

said, "McMillin, you're off the team." Made an example of me. So he kicked me off the team and well, I was heartbroken because I thought I was Pistol Pete Maravich. I was the next . . . So we went on and there were some others guys that couldn't play for Coach Coughlan's at that time. And we went to the First Baptist church . . . we all went to the First Baptist church and we all organized a church team. And we ended up winning the Baptist state championship with that team. And we scrimmaged a high school team and we were beating them when they stopped us from playing them. But we had a really good church basketball team. Now I'm sixty . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**     That would have been the ultimate revenge, wouldn't it?

**MCMILLIN:**     [26:24] Well but here's the funny part. Coughlan's and I have become great friends. Here I am at sixty years old completely bald. So every time he sees me he's like, "McMillin you can play for me now." He just thinks it's the biggest joke. Like, "Coach, you kicked me off the high school team!" So it's a . . . It's just Westlake. That was just Westlake. In the way it was. But everything worked out. It sure did. Good, good people. We had great teachers. We had a great high school. I was . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**     Did you have a favorite teacher?

**MCMILLIN:**     [26:58] The favorite teacher . . . There were so many great teachers. I tell you, I was an avid hunter and probably some of this I shouldn't share, but I guess I will because most of them are passed away and gone.

**ARSENEAULT:**      You skipped class to go hunting?

**MCMILLIN:**      [27:14] Oh, yeah. Yeah lots of times. We would go early in the morning prior to homeroom and a lot of times we wouldn't make it into class on time. But if you would bring the teachers the ducks, they kind of waived that tardy slip [laughs]. So we learned pretty quick that okay we can make a hunting trip and bring so-and-so some ducks and we're going to be okay. And probably my grade point average might have been on a curve, too. Because I could have been . . . in hindsight I wish I'd really studied and I wish I had really would applied myself in high school because I could have been a really good student. But it was a . . . I played a lot. I had a blast, and we hunted a lot, we had a good time, and . . . Yeah, but now as I see my kids and grandkids, school was a place to prepare for an education to get a job that you don't have to work so hard in life and you can make all the money that you want to have. And of course, one of the things I call money is fun coupons. The more money you have, the more fun you can have. So if somebody would have taught me at an early age, "Hey man, get that education so you can have fun coupons so you can go on those trips to Jamaica, or to snow skiing in Colorado, and you can afford all that." I try to share that sometimes with kids when I see them. Say, "Look, most important things is get the education." And when I find the class clown in the class, I'm especially drawn to that kid.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Because that was you?

**MCMILLIN:**      [28:41] That was me. Yeah. I always had fun. We always had a good time. We always laughed and cut up. And I guess you can . . . sometimes . . . and then things and

whether the job I have now as a business development manager, or whether . . . It's about building relationships. And you can build a lot of relationships with humor. And when people see that laughing . . . I laugh at myself a lot. I mean I'm . . . I think I do funny things. And when I do something funny I laugh about it. Then when . . . That really diffuses a situation when people see that you can laugh at your own self. That you're not taking yourself so serious. It's . . . It really helps. Humor is . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      Did you learn that from your family? Or is that just something . . .?

**MCMILLIN:**          I guess that's just something that I learned through life just watching people. I've always watched people. And so I guess as I'm . . . I've always impersonated people. And whether it was local people that were a little different or a couple of impersonations . . . Forrest Gump and Elvis. It's kind of . . . through that impersonation though, of watching things and doing things, it opened up a career for me. As a young kid growing up, we would go to auctions on Friday nights. That was a big event. And I would always impersonate the auctioneer.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [30:05] The cattle auction?

**MCMILLIN:**          It was a . . . brown furniture they call it.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Okay.

**MCMILLIN:**          [30:10] Kind of junk auctions. It was all kind of stuff. They would have



furniture, and washing machines, and everything from ax, hatchets, sledgehammers, toys, whatever. It was Morris' Auction. Dave Black was the auctioneer. And we were . . . Friday night that was what we did as a family. We'd go to the auction and not telling what we might come home with. But due to that, and impersonating the auctioneer . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**     They're the ones that talk really fast?

**MCMILLIN:**        Yes. I had a friend that had cancer and she needed an auctioneer and I did the auction for her. Well in 2007, I decided I wanted to get my auctioneer license so I went to Texas Auctioneer Academy and I've been a licensed and bonded auctioneer in the state of Louisiana since 2007.

**ARSENEAULT:**     Wow. That's awesome.

**MCMILLIN:**        [31:00] Yeah. It's wonderful.

**ARSENEAULT:**     Kind of strange how life . . .

**MCMILLIN:**        See and then that really combines all of things that . . . That's my gift from God. It really is because I can give that back to a lot of people. I can raise a lot of money for a lot of people. That's a gift that . . . One I can make money at, and one I can give back.

**ARSENEAULT:**     Yeah.

**MCMILLIAN:**      So it's . . . that's something. And hopefully someday . . . my wife Sue also went to auctioneer school after I went to learn the business side of it . . . That we'll have our own auction business, but . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      Awesome.

**MCMILLIN:**      [31:30] Yeah. That's pretty neat.

**ARSENEAULT:**      So you went to high school, you somehow made it . . .

**MCMILLIN:**      I made it.

**ARSENEAULT:**      And then . . .

**MCMILLIN:**      [31:36] I went to McNeese.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Okay.

**MCMILLIN:**      In . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      '73? Or . . .

**MCMILLIN:**      [31:40] Seventy . . . I graduated in '73, so '74, '75. A couple years at

McNeese. I was going to school to be a coach. Although getting kicked off the basketball team didn't hinder me I thought, hey I want to be a middle school coach. And that was . . . so you . . . I was in education. But what I didn't really realize is how much they got paid. And when I started looking at what the salary was of these, I said, "Wow maybe this isn't the right opportunity for me." So I actually had an opportunity to go put in an application at one of the local industries. And Westlake being the hometown bedroom community to the industries, suddenly I know all the people that are in this plant because one of them was my baseball coach, and another one, my dad and him are best friends and so-and-so. So I went and applied at Conoco Chemical and I ended up getting a job . . . A really good job.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [32:40] And you say the bedroom. Does that mean like everyone that works at the plant lives in Westlake?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah. Bedroom community.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [32:45] Okay.

**MCMILLIN:**      Westlake was always a bedroom community to the industries. The lion's share of the people that lived in Westlake and Mossville worked in either Conoco, or Conoco Chemical at the time, or maybe Citgo and stuff like this. So Westlake was known as a bedroom community to the industries. So I ended up not finishing McNeese because I found a job that instead of making fourteen to sixteen thousand a year, started me off twenty five to thirty thousand a year.

**ARSENEAULT:**      You'd be kind of foolish not to I think.

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah. Yeah so that's where my career started in the industries. And . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [33:18] What do you remember about McNeese? So you were there for a couple of years. Did you live on campus?

**MCMILLIN:**      No, I lived at home. Drove back and forth carpool with a girl that I graduated my high school with, which was the worst driver ever. She would drive down . . . We still laugh about that. Glenda Carson, but Glenda [Rampant?] and later her dad was one of my top operators. But my gosh, carpooling to school with her. We had fun at McNeese. It was good. We had good classes. I was doing well. I started kind of applying myself because I had to study because they didn't care . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      They didn't accept ducks?

**MCMILLIN:**      [33:49] Yeah. They didn't accept ducks. Well, maybe a teacher or two did [laughs]. But it didn't work on . . . yeah they didn't accept ducks so I had to really kind of study. And it was fun the couple years I was there. We were having a good time. But the realization of that . . . Hey what I want to do doesn't pay much money, my life changed. And then when you started looking at the industries . . . and look, I'm very pro-industry. I grew up in the industry so it's always been a part of my community, it's always been a part of my life. So getting on at the industries and finding out that, hey you've got a very good salary, you've got a

401K, you've got healthcare, I mean its . . . it was good to me. Though I'll say baseball was very very good to me, the industries are very very good to my family. And of course my dad being a plumber built many houses for people that worked in the industries. Whether it was Conoco, Conoco Chemical, Citgo, whatever. These were good jobs and that started my industrial career out there as eighteen years in operations, and five years in the environmental group.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [35:02] What made you choose Conoco? Because I know there's a bunch of . . .

**MCMILLIN:**      Well I'd actually got on . . . I had a couple of applications in. I had one out at PPG, and Conoco was the first that called me in . . . tested me. I passed the test and they made me a job offer and I took it. A week later PPG called me and said, "Hey we got a job for you." I said, "I'm sorry. I'm already working at Conoco, thank you." But yeah it was . . . I guess God's intervention. And I worked at the chemical plant right there at Conoco Chemical, what is now . . . It was Conoco Chemical, then it went to Vista, Condea Vista, and now it's Sasol. So I grew up out there. I got on when I was twenty years old. And a twenty year old kid.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [35:45] What were your first duties? You were an operator?

**MCMILLIN:**      First duties were utility helper. I was a grunt guy and they . . . Look, they torture you. That was in 1976 when I started at Conoco Chemical as a young, know it all twenty, twenty-one year old kid coming into a world of thirty, forty, fifty year old guys that had lot of experience. And you know you often hear the statement I wish I knew what I knew now, well I'd

hear them say that. I'd say, "Well tell me what you know. Come on. Tell me." Said, "Well you're just going to have to learn."

**ARSENEAULT:**      [36:20] Figure it out?

**MCMILLIN:**      Now I know . . . At sixty I know what I know now, but at twenty I thought I knew it all. And . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      What was it? What do you know Mr. Hal?

**MCMILLIN:**      Well it's . . . the true life experiences of what it takes to get something done. Your individualness is not going to get you through. You really need . . . I guess really you need to depend on your life lessons that you have to learn, to become much more mellower, and to listen to people, to empower people to help you, to not try to do it all yourself. Some of those things. That you think at twenty, "I'm invincible." But you realize later in life that hey, you're not invincible and that if you utilize the other people's great skills that they have, you can be so much stronger and do so much more.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [37:21] So how did they torture you?

**MCMILLIN:**      Oh, they would . . . every little dirty job there was. The first time I worked overtime we had to chip some [coke?] out of this big pipe and then we had to clean this convection section. And this guy was like, "I'll do the chipping. I'll do the chipping. I'm going

to let you do the cleaning of the convection section.” Well what I didn’t know was that I had to put on a mask and a paper suit and get in and blow this dust out of there. And when I came home from work I had to take like three baths. I was completely orange with this . . . Some of this powder and dust that I had back then. But they fed me, and I’ll never forget my first check. Because I wasn’t used to making a lot of money, but my first check was like 856 dollars for a week or two weeks work. And I’m like, “My God I’m rich.” [Laughs].

**ARSENEAULT:**      [38:20] What’d you do with the money? Do you remember?

**MCMILLIN:**      I was living . . . well I was living in a trailer. I was married. It was a first marriage and I was just like, “Look we’re rich.” And I started signing up working all the overtime I could because . . . And then I found that there were more cleaner jobs than that one, but I kind of got hit with that one right off. And they’d pick at you. Send you after a left-handed wrench, which there’s no such thing as a left-handed wrench, or a bucket of steam. Just general stuff like that.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Just hazing.

**MCMILLIN:**      [38:48] Hazing, yeah. Kind of the hazing. But it was good. It was such a great group of guys. They never hurt you, but they would push you to the edge.

**ARSENEAULT:**      They would joke.

**MCMILLIN:**            Yeah they were practical jokers. And I guess really you learned real quick not to let them . . . Not to let anything they said or did bother you. Because if they saw it bother you . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      They're going to keep doing it.

**MCMILLIN:**            [39:14] They were going to torture you. So its . . . one heater, two bleeder, fireball McMillin give me all the nicknames you want because it don't bother me. Put it on my hardhat. And it's . . . yeah. People would try to mess with me or pick on me I just . . . Man, look. I was an operator for eighteen years. You're not going to get me. I've been through some of the guys I work with. I had a guy that I used to work with in one of the unit, he would take two weeks to set up a practical joke. I mean this guy was calculated. Then he would pull it on you and you're like, "Wow."

**ARSENEAULT:**      Didn't see it coming?

**MCMILLIN:**            Didn't see it coming.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Do you remember any of them, or?

**MCMILLIN:**            [39:51] No.

**ARSENEAULT:**      You just remember . . .



**MCMILLIN:**            We just had a lot of fun.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Yeah.

**MCMILLIN:**            Yeah. The industries have changed a whole lot. They're a lot stricter than when we first got out there. I mean they were . . . it was . . . there was definitely a protocol. And it's one of the things you learned out there. That you had the shift foremans who were the bosses, you had the top operators who you listened to, you had the boardmen who would give you orders, and you were outside. And as you progressed up in those places, it was like a rank and you would do as they said. And our mission every shift we had was to get there and make [on spec product?] and do the best that we could to keep everybody safe, and running right, and make [on spec?] product. But here's the deal. In the twenty-three years we were out there, I keep seeing these guys come in with boudin sausage or bringing in pistolettes, or donuts. I'm like, "What's your job?" "Business development." "What do you do?" "Build relationships so our company can get some work out here." I'm going to have that job someday.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Eat boudin all day?

**MCMILLIN:**            Yeah.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [41:03] That's the job to have.

**MCMILLIN:**            That's what I had to do this morning. I had to go deliver boudin for you

out here. Boudin sausage to . . . so I'm a business . . . My real job now is I'm a business development manager for an engineering company for Livingston Engineers. I've been doing that for about ten years. But I worked from 1976 to 1999 in the industries. Then I went into business development with a number of companies. Market kind of slowed, went to some different companies, but I've locked in with this company that I've been with now for ten years. Great job. Great job. Great people, great job, so I get . . . although I don't, as you remember back, don't have that college degree, I have a gift. And my gift is being a people person, being a good listener, understanding through all the hazing and harassment that I've gotten in my life, to not get upset about something. To stay low-key, mellow, and listen. And through building relationships, it makes my job, what I do as a business development manager for an engineering company, really good. I've got really good . . . I sell the work and skill of engineers, good engineers. And I've learned what they do and I don't have to do it, but I know what they do.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [42:15] They might not be able to communicate what they do, but you can for them?

**MCMILLIN:**      I wasn't going to say that, but being how you said that . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      I know engineers.

**MCMILLIN:**      Engineers at times can be analytical.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Right.

**MCMILLIN:**            [42:24] So they need a personality.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Right.

**MCMILLIN:**            Well, here I am.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Right.

**MCMILLIN:**            [42:29] So the things that I do keep me in the public eye, okay? Many years ago I started doing a radio show in 1995 and from that radio show came an opportunity to do television outdoor tips.

**ARSENEAULT:**      What is the radio show?

**MCMILLIN:**            The radio show is called Sportsman's Paradise. I do it once a week on Wednesday afternoons from five to six. We talk about hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, camping, all the things southwest Louisiana . . . on today's show I'm going to have a girl there . . . we got the whitetail deer auction coming up and we were talking about that. Last week's show we were talking about salty catch fishing rodeo, before that . . . the week before the fourth of July fishing rodeo. So I do a weekly radio show. Once a month I go on KPLC and I do the outdoor tips. Being a hunting guide, that I started back in the 70s, I was a hunting guide from the early 70s for about thirty years. All this has laid the groundwork for what we do. And all that's laid the groundwork for business development. Sometimes in business development you hunt with

people, sometimes you play golf with them. I enjoy playing golf. Sometimes you build the relationships in different ways. Avid LSU fan. You might see me at an LSU game, or a tailgate party or something. So there's a lot of things that I've done in life to get me to what my job is now as . . . My true job as business development manager for Levingston. The auction stuff doesn't hurt because it exposes me that I'm in a crowd of four hundred people and a lot of these people are industrial people and they say, "Hey that's Hal McMillin up there." And so when I go in their plant we talk about the different things maybe where there's an auction, maybe where the fish are biting. Different things, or LSU, or McNeese, or whatever that you can build that rapport with them. So that works out. And I'm having fun. I got one of the . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [44:14] Good.

**MCMILLIN:**      My wife says I don't have a job. I said, "Yes I do, baby. They pay me every two weeks."

**ARSENEAULT:**      She says you're having too much fun for it to be work?

**MCMILLIN:**      [44:22] I'm having too much fun. I love my work. I love the people I work with.

**ARSENEAULT:**      And what's your wife's name?

**MCMILLIN:**      Sue. Sweetheart. Second wife. Been married . . . be twenty-six years July

twentieth.

**ARSENEAULT:**     And where did y'all meet?

**MCMILLIN:**        High school. She wouldn't have nothing to do with me. We got back together our fifteen years class reunion. That's a whole 'nother story, but . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**     [44:39] Wow.

**MCMILLIN:**        She wouldn't have much to do with me in high school. She said I was too fun loving [laughs].

**ARSENEAULT:**     Too many fun coupons.

**MCMILLIN:**        Yeah I was having a lot of fun and she was like, "That guy's a little wild for me."

**ARSENEAULT:**     Trouble.

**MCMILLIN:**        "He's . . ." But then at our fifteen year class reunion I was single and she had gotten back with her ex. We danced. I always liked her and we had kind of had a connection. And then three months later I was going to a nightclub and I happened to stop at another night club called Charlie's before I was there and she was at a retirement party. And I'm like, "Hey

where's your ex?" and she's like, "Well we split up." And I'm like, get that scope on there. And she's already telling her girlfriend, "Hey don't leave me this guy's going to be following me." And I started stalking her. I really did. I had to hunt her down.

[45:31] Knew her mom and I called her mom, and her mom kept saying, "No, she's not here." But I knew she was living with her mom because her brother told me that so I'd keep calling. And finally she says, one time her mom . . . She liked me. I knew her mom from a business that her mom used to be in. Mom said, "Sue you just going to have to talk to this little McMillin boy. I just can't lie to him no more." So she took the phone and I finally got a date with her and she realized that I wasn't the same guy in 1973. Although I had a few of the traits, but when you find your soulmate, and you find your best friend, and you marry her . . . We lived together a little while before we got married because we both didn't trust . . . both going through divorces and stuff like that. And she had two kids, Patrick and Amy, and I had two kids, Marsha and Boon.

But it worked. It worked. And that's been probably one of the greatest things in our life is that I've had the opportunity to be married to my best friend. And the greatest thing about Sue is that she lets me be Hal all the time. I can be the same Hal sitting here messing with you, cutting up, she knows me. She knows my personality. She knows who I am. I'm just so blessed. And she's pretty. She's real pretty.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [46:49] That doesn't hurt.

**MCMILLIN:**      All my buddies say I outran the coverage [laughs]. Way above my head. She's a sweetheart. She's a good girl.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [46:58] So I have to ask. So you are pro-industry, but you're also it sounds like pro-environment. You want conservation and you want . . .

**MCMILLIN:**      [Agrees]. Yeah.

**ARSENEAULT:**      How do you reconcile that when it sometimes doesn't . . . ?

**MCMILLIN:**      Well, it does. It really does. I mean we have the agencies that watch the industries. I was part of the environmental group for five years, so I have first-hand knowledge of going on inspections with the DEQ [Department of Environmental Quality]. I have first-hand knowledge of the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] being in the plant, and those guys take their job very serious and they watch out. And that was in 1999. The industries like everything else out there, whether it's a computer or any . . . from the iPhones, have exponentially grown greatly in their ability to be more efficient. Well that was a big fly in there, wasn't it? Exponentially gotten better to grow in their abilities to do things better.

[48:06] The industries, they don't . . . They try not to have any upsets, and try to not to hurt our environment, and they have checks and balances in there. I was a part of the era that in the 70s wasn't near as restricted as it is now. But we wasn't ever hurting the environment. We . . . but they're very strict and they watch it. And they're very . . . we've got really good agencies that watch our environment. So I have a lot of faith in what those guys doing. I mean I don't feel like our plants are here . . .

Is there a bit of a trade off with the lights and the noise and the traffic and things like this? Absolutely. But look at the good jobs we have. Look at . . . As I talked earlier about the

401Ks, and insurance, and the great lives you can have, and the vacations you can take, and the homecoming gowns you can buy for your kids, and afford things because you have a good job in the industry. So, yeah. And I am an outdoorsman. And they put a lot back. They put a lot back to the outdoors. Or as an auctioneer I often see whether it's the industry itself, or a contractor of the industry spending money with Delta Waterfowl, Ducks Unlimited, Whitetail deer, the different auctions that I get to do. They put a lot back into the community and . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [49:41] How about any accidental spills? Like I know . . . I don't know if it was Conoco, but Condea Vista in the . . . Mossville. I don't know if you remember.

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah the EDC [ethylene dichloride] spill?

**ARSENEAULT:**      [Agrees].

**MCMILLIN:**      [49:51] Yeah.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Do you remember?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah I was right in the middle of it. I know all about it. And I know that there's been remediation of that. There was a . . . They'd put all kind of wells in. That we used to check the sands in those wells. Check to see if there was any contamination and then different levels whether it was twenty foot, eighty foot, hundred foot . . . but there has been mistakes made. I mean my gosh, we're all capable of not doing a hundred percent all the time. But they've



done a lot of work to remediate all that. And they bought out a lot of people in that Bel Air area that they thought was affected. So they've done the right thing in my mind to make things better. And anytime you can have what essentially started out as a nine billion dollar project, and now eleven million dollar project, right here in my police jury district, in my hometown, that hopefully my kids and grandkids will have opportunity to work at and stay here in southwest Louisiana and not have to move off because they don't have opportunities here. And that's one thing that I guess as an elected official working with these industries is give the local people first shot. And they have been pretty good about that.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [51:14] What inspired you to become a councilman after . . . ?

**MCMILLIN:**      Oh, my mom. Yeah. Growing up through the whole era of watching my mom and going to these conventions and seeing Governor Edwards at an early age, or governor John McKeithen . . . seeing all these people. [It made me say?], "Hey I want to do that someday." But this is the way I started out and believe it or not I used to be very very nervous when I'd get in front of people to speak. Had butterflies. And then I thought, "What is this feeling? Man, I'm nervous." But if you take that feeling . . . You can't get that feeling from any drink, or any drug, or anything. That's . . . That feeling, that fear of speaking in front of people, what if it's a good feeling and I'm just not realizing it's a good feeling? And I started thinking, okay I want to feel this feeling. I want to feel what it feels like to get this rush. This is not negative. Feel that energy.

[52:12] So I started off as PTO president, and I was PTO president when my kids were in school. Then I was on the Westlake . . . Mossville and Westlake recreation district where I

worked with Mossville and Westlake, on both, as a commissioner for the recreation district.

Then I ran for political office. Got beat. First time I ran I lost. Like to kill me. I think, 'Oh my gosh what happened?'

**ARSENEAULT:**      [52:41] What's the election process like? Did you campaign?

**MCMILLIN:**      I campaigned, but I was new and I was young. Look, I was that hometown guy that may have been known as the party guy, the fun loving guy. Can this guy be serious? I had to overcome that. I had to go back and work harder at different events to make sure people saw me in a different light. That I wasn't just some class clown, okay? Because you're always seventeen in your hometown. And some of the things that you did . . . I'll never forget the first time I knocked on Ms. Trahan's door and I said, "Ms. Trahan, I'm Hal McMillin I'm running for city council and I'd really like to . . . Your support. I think I can get in there and do a good job." She looked at me and she said, "Hal McMillin. Aren't you that little boy that threw tomatoes at my car?" I said, "Yes ma'am, but I've outgrown that stage." [Both laugh].

So there's things like that that you got to overcome. You got to go back and you've got to build confidence in Ms. Trahan that she'll vote for you. So I got beat the first time, but I worked harder. I didn't let defeat be a negative. I took it as a positive. Said okay. So I worked harder on the recreation board. I got involved in the Kiwanis Club. I did more things for the community to show, hey I can lead. I got elected the second time to the city council and served on there one term, and then ran and got elected my second term. Then the opportunity to run for police juror came up and I ran for police juror and won that election.

**ARSENEAULT:**      And that includes like, council for like the Mossville area, too?

**MCMILLIN:**      [54:41] Well police juror does. Police juror is Westlake, Mossville. Mossville was about half in my district when I first got in there, but now it's entirely in my district.

**ARSENEAULT:**      And it's still wards?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah. Ward three . . . Ward four is the . . . I have some in ward four and ward six in my ward, but the boundary lines have changed. Usually half of Westlake was on Ms. Griffin's side of Lake Charles, but I have all of Westlake and all of Mossville. And it's a [compass?] in my police jury district, so.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [54:46] What do you remember about Mossville? Like your first impressions of the area?

**MCMILLIN:**      I've known Mossville all my life.

**ARSENEAULT:**      So you . . .

**MCMILLIN:**      I mean my dad was a hometown plumber so we had . . . He had a lot of friends over there. They . . . whether it was from horses, or beagles . . . A lot of blacks enjoy rabbit hunting. And a lot of blacks . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      And beagles are rabbit dogs?

**MCMILLIN:**      Rabbit dogs, yeah.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [55:06] Okay.

**MCMILLIN:**      They're rabbit dogs. And we would . . . My dad would go over and see people from Mossville. Here's something I remember at an early age. Mossville High School had a very good football team and they would play in Westlake, but they didn't really have any . . . They had a few stands. They didn't have much, but we would go and sit in the car and watch the Mossville football team who was really good. In the mid-60s they had some really good athletes. In fact, even some of them went to pros. But . . . so I remember that.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [55:42] Richard Lee.

**MCMILLIN:**      Richard Lee. Yeah. Richard . . . Good friend of mine. I worked with him at the plant. A good guy. Joe Comeaux. Joe Comeaux never went to the pros, but had played for Grambling [University]. The whole Comeaux family was very good. So a lot of really good football players and stuff like this. And then I had a lot of friends in Mossville. I mean its . . . it just . . . The Dellafosse family, the Joe [Bear?] family, the Rigmaiden family . . . They're just a lot. I [got a feeling?] I'm going to leave some out and I really shouldn't, but I made friends easy. I didn't look at color of skin or . . . I looked at people's hearts and if they were good people then we became good friends. That was fun.

I guess really . . . another involvement with Mossville was through Mr. Rigmaiden, Josh Rigmaiden, who the center is named after. He was on the recreation board with me and we did a lot of things. We couldn't agree on everything, but we did a lot of things together. Usually when we'd do something in the Westlake area, we'd make sure we'd do something similar in the Mossville area because Mossville had a big base of kids out there. So we . . . The recreation district brought Westlake and Mossville together in a lot of ways, so. I always loved going out there, too. Anytime I smelled barbeque smoke coming out of that recreation center out there I usually try to stop by and see who I knew.

[57:16] Coach Williams, a true mentor to me, high school teacher, one of the greatest men I've ever known. Never saw color. He was always a peaceful guy and very good friend of mine. He's one of the people who's played an important role in my life. So we had a lot of good people from Mossville area.

**ARSENEAULT:** Did you ever serve on the water board or anything like that in Mossville?

**MCMILLIN:** No, I didn't.

**ARSENEAULT:** Was that all . . .? Okay.

**MCMILLIN:** [57:44] No I didn't serve on a water board, but as police juror I appointed people to the water board and I had a lot of really good people on that water district out there. Blunt . . . There's a number of people that on the different water boards and districts. Raymond [Malbow?], great guy, I went to high school with Raymond. Raymond was one of

those guys that applied himself if high school. Really smart guy and a good friend today, so.  
Good folks.

**ARSENEAULT:**     When did Mossville get water? I'm trying . . .

**MCMILLIN:**     [58:16] I don't know the exact day.

**ARSENEAULT:**     Exact day.

**MCMILLIN:**     It had it before I got there.

**ARSENEAULT:**     [58:17] Okay.

**MCMILLIN:**     Yeah they had a water district so they had it. Some other police jurors prior to me did that water district, but yeah I've always felt like Mossville . . . From my police jury standpoint having a lot of friends out there, always fought for Mossville. Whatever they would need I would try to be the person they would . . . go-to guy. That's one thing I learned very early in politics, is if you're going to be in politics and you're going to be a servant, you need to serve and you need to serve all the people. And once you get elected it doesn't matter if that person voted for you, or not. They're your constituent and you need to serve them. So I always liked being the conduit between the problem and solving the problem.

And that's what I talked about earlier, is I've learned through relationships that I don't have to do it all. I've got people, really good people in the parish that I can assign stuff to and it

gets done. Now, one thing they know about me is I always close the circle. If I talk to somebody and they have a problem and I assign this to them, then I'm going to come back and talk to them and make sure it got did. And I'm going to come . . . Go back to that person and make sure they were satisfied with the effort. So that's just part of the political stuff that you learn to do and I think it's the right way to do it. I had one time in a meeting a guy say, "Well I've been trying to call you I couldn't get in touch with you." That's my number one pet peeve. You can get in touch with me. My cell phone number is one of the easiest ones in the parish: 4-8-8 4-8-4-8. If you can't get in touch with me, shame on you.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [59:52] You should be an injury lawyer.

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah I should. It's right here. It's an iPhone on my hip and I check it often. I call people back that butt dial me. They're like, "Oh man I just butt dialed you, sorry." I said, "Well I saw you called I wanted to make sure you didn't need something." But that's part of being a public servant. So it's been a good run.

**ARSENEAULT:**      So you were a councilman from '99 . . . '95 . . .

**MCMILLIN:**      Five to '99 . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:00:17] To '99.

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:00:18] And then you decided to run for police . . .?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yes.

**ARSENEAULT:**      What made you . . .?

**MCMILLIN:**      Well I had some people that . . . The police jurors in there who was a friend of mine. That was a pretty tough run. A guy named David Abshire. They felt like they wanted someone different and they came to me and talked to me about it and said, "Hey we feel like you're the guy. That it's your turn to run for this and we'll help you." And I guess really it kind of makes you feel pretty good when a group of people come to you and say, "Hey we want you." Wow that's a good feeling. And, "We're going to support you."

Now, I didn't think I was going to win [laughs]. I didn't think I was going to win. I thought, "Wow this guy's an incumbent police juror," and stuff. But I'd started doing the outdoor tips on KPLC and I was getting a lot of exposure on T.V. from . . . And once a week I do an outdoor tip. This was before I did it monthly. I was doing it once a week. And people knew me. And I guess they saw that I was sincere in wanting to be a police juror and they gave me an opportunity. And I won fifty-two, forty-eight. Close election. It surprised not only me, but a lot of people, but I won and I've loved being on there ever since.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:01:40] Was it a cordial . . .?

**MCMILLIN:**      No. No, it wasn't cordial. It wasn't. No, he was hurt and I can see how he



would be hurt because when someone runs against me now, it would hurt if they beat me. So we . . . it took time for that to heal. He's a great man, but I just . . . I seized the opportunity and the people gave me that opportunity and it's hard to run against someone. Yeah. It is. And it hurt him. I say it did. He was mad at me for a while, but that's healed up now. So that's not . . . Sometimes there's some things in politics that are not real fun. It's tough.

The toughest decision in politics is zoning issues. Any time you have a zoning issue you've got a whole group of people over here that want it, and a whole group of people over here that don't want it. I kin it to being like a basketball official. When a basketball official blows a whistle, usually fifty percent this team's not going to like it, and this team is, and that team's not. So it's almost like whenever you're doing a zoning case, you're going to have people at odds. Those are the toughest and I take them the most serious. But yeah.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:03:05] What about rezoning Mossville into heavy industrial?

**MCMILLIN:**      Tough. Tough.

**ARSENEAULT:**      What was that like?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yeah that's tough decisions. You see the factors of what Sasol's going to bring with this economic development, but you also see people that's lived there all their life. But in my opinion, Sasol was more than fair. The people that they . . . needed their property for a project was paid very well. The people that they just wanted to be a good neighbor and say, "Hey we're going to give you an opportunity to sell on the VPP [voluntary property purchase] plan and

buy out sixty percent above appraised value.” Plus paying closing costs, plus incentives if you signed early and stuff like this. You offer me sixty percent above appraised value of my house right now, you can have the close. I’ll just go. That’s a tremendous offer. In fact, I think it’s even better than . . . We all remember the history of Love Canal. That was a better offer than what the people got at Love Canal.

[1:04:16] So I feel like Sasol’s been very fair in their offer. I feel like there are some people in Mossville had been very unfair in wanting to stay and try to get more. And that’s a tough situation. Some people want to stay because they want to stay . . . They don’t want to leave their home site. But there are some people that want to stay because they’re holding out. And I think those people are going to lose in the long run. They should have took the very fair offer from the beginning. My opinion, but you can point-counterpoint that all day. But my opinion is Sasol as an industry with they’ve done has been very fair to the majority of the people.

There’s some people that didn’t want to leave, and it hurts them to leave, and it’s their community and their history, but for the better good of the entire Calcasieu Parish and everything, we can’t let an eleven billion dollar project not come to southwest Louisiana. Is there growing pains? Absolutely. Is there people that having to leave their home that didn’t want to leave their home? Yes. Is there people that are waiting in traffic much longer or at the restaurant much longer? We all are. But it’s going to be better in the long run for all of us and I’m excited about that. I really am.

I think that the legacy of what we’re trying to do right now as good elected officials is leave a legacy from thirty to forty years from now. They’ll look back and say wow, these folks have . . . they really were doing the right thing in some tough situations. One of the things that we’ve done and I’ve been a core group member of this from day one and was a chairmen of this

now that we've hired a director and facilitator, but I've been in the go group since it started, since inception. Since the first mill at the pioneer club saying hey we need to be proactive in southwest Louisiana to come up with what do we need to do to structure the growth that thirty to forty years from now people will go back say, "Wow, those guys weren't thinking." We want to try to be proactive and the industries are working with us on that. They really are. I mean Mike Hayes and Kim Cusumano, I got both of them cell numbers and we talk often and we don't always agree, but we can agree to disagree and still be friends on different things.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:06:45] So police jury, your duties are zoning, what are some other?

**MCMILLIN:**      Well, we do a lot of things. We do all the infrastructure stuff on parish roads, drainage is huge . . . That's us. Of course we have signage, drainage, infrastructure from . . . we have water districts, some sewer districts, we take care of other things like the jailhouse, and then the courthouse, we take care of mosquito control, we take care of the libraries. Being a police jury encompasses a lot of things. A lot of things. But really it's a day to day individual constituent that may have a problem that his trash can's busted, or his trash didn't get picked up. Or my ditch is . . . The grass is high and my ditch and my ditch ain't draining right, or hey my neighbor's septic system isn't working and I need somebody to come out. All kinds of calls. I get tons of calls. Tree limb fell on this property, or on this line, or there's . . . That's what I enjoy about it. Every day is . . . brings a different set of opportunities to help somebody.

**ARSENEAULT:**      What's the craziest call you can remember?

**MCMILLIN:**            It wasn't me. It was another buddy of mine. He had a call from a constituent that had this duck. That the duck was attacking . . . This duck was sitting out and attacking this guy when he'd go to the mailbox and he wanted the parish to do something about the neighbor's duck that was attacking him. That was a little out there. Now look, I've had some interesting calls. Animal control, a lot of times that's . . . There's a lot of interesting things with animal control. We run animal control, also. And well we got a great guy over there. Nathan [Reno?] does a wonderful job.

[1:08:49] What I've learned is all my managers at the parish and . . . whether it's my west side [Darren?] White who's over my public works, or Allen Wayne Wright who's over entire public works, if you empower these people to do their job they, like us, want to do a good job. They want to go home in the night and say, "Well I had a good day today I helped a lot of people." So it's really an opportunity to be there. To be that person that has the relationships built inside the police jury whether if it's from Brian at the top, to Dane, to Allen Wayne Wright, or Wes Crane with zoning and planning . . . Being in the mix, I love it. I'm in the mix. I get to do things. I see the inside working of the police jury.

**ARSENEAULT:**        So during hurricane . . . we like to . . . With oral history we like to stay in the far past, but I always forget that [Hurricane] Rita was already like ten years ago.

**MCMILLIN:**            Yeah.

**ARSENEAULT:**        So what was that like? We can switch gears for just a second.

**MCMILLIN:**            Switch gears?

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:09:57] Yeah.

**MCMILLIN:**            Okay. Where's the water? I left it in my truck.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Oh.

**UNKNOWN:**           We can take a break.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Take a break? Do you have time?

**MCMILLIN:**           [1:10:04] Yeah. We got time [break in tape].

**ARSENEAULT:**      Talk about . . .

**MCMILLIN:**           Family.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Your siblings.

**MCMILLIN:**           Yes. I grew up in a great family. I had an older brother of mine that was . . . seventeen years older than me and he lived in the jet set world of New York City. Actually, he used to escort Ethel Merman and Broadway stars to stuff. So as a young kid I . . . at ten years

old I used to go to New York with my mom. My dad never liked to go [on these?]. So we'd go on trips to New York so [Mackie?] actually died at a young age. He died in 1984. He was forty-four years old, but he lived a great life. He was a publisher for McCall's books, magazine, then an entrepreneur. Started his own business down in Florida a little bit later when he moved out of New York to Florida, but a great guy. Brought me into a different culture in the early years of my life that I got to see Broadway plays. First Broadway play I ever went to was "Oklahoma." I saw "Mame" and "Jesus Christ Superstar" and this was in the 70s when this was big time stuff. So I got to see that aspect.

[1:11:09] My older brother Mickey was a hunter. He drug me through the marshes and rice fields of Southwest Louisiana. A really good baseball player. Always playing ball or something. So that was it. My sister Jan, who is eight years older than me, sweetest lady in the world. She reminds me of my wife Sue. Jan's a lot like Sue; sweetheart. I used to . . . she'd have to watch me sometimes and I'd get mad at her and run away. We had woods behind the back of our house I'd take my BB gun and go into the woods and take two mayonnaise sandwiches. Miracle whip of course. Only Miracle Whip. Take off and head through the woods and I think she enjoyed me running away I think. Before long I'd look around and she had my sandwiches made for me [laughs].

But we . . . She was eight years older. I can remember when she was . . . Let's see, I guess she would have been about sixteen, starting to date, or seventeen. I was eight or nine. I would always torture her boyfriends when they would come over. She was a homecoming queen at Westlake High. I'm so proud of Jan. She still lives in Moss Bluff. Very proud of her. Her grandson by the way is a second baseman for the Atlanta Braves. His name is Jayce Peterson. So we have a little rock star superstar in the family, but very proud of . . . And she has three

daughters and my brother Mickey has a son and two daughters. We're all very close. We got a close family. We usually have Christmas at my house and there's usually sixty or seventy people there.

[1:12:36] I have two children, Marsha and Boon. Marsha has a . . . my granddaughter Anne Rose who's . . . Be two in November. And of course Boon has a . . . Some grandchildren there, Hayden and Madison. They're probably . . . Let's see, eleven and twelve now. Madison's the oldest. They're step-grandkids, but I don't ever hear the word step. The step . . . They're grandkids. I mean like Patrick and Amy who are my step-kids not my birth kids, but they're my family. And I helped raise them and grow up with them. We all have a very close relationship.

In 1995 Sue's brother and his wife and their son were in a really bad car wreck and it ended up killing Sue's brother and his wife. And Chris [Atchison?] was thirteen at the time. An eighth grader. Didn't really know Chris real well, but he was an eighth grader at W.W. Lewis. But he had just lost his mom and dad and there wasn't any place for Chris to go so we took him in the McMillin family.

So I raised Chris from the time he was thirteen, and now he's a young man grown. Has his own family. Very proud of Chris. He was a kid that made a . . . What'd he make? It was twenty-eight or something on the ACT test. He's smart. His parents had him really . . . He did well on that. He was really smart. Got him into high school football and he enjoyed that. Although he wasn't a superstar he hung in with the team. He's got great memories. Now he's a scaffolding supervisor at one of the industries as well as doing real well with the media stuff. He's got drones so he likes to fly and all that kind of stuff.

[1:14:23] So we've had a really good family around us. And Sue and I have had a blended family, but as I said on the twentieth of July will be our twenty-sixth wedding

anniversary. And if you also remember July twentieth another event happened. It was the same day as the lunar landing. It was on July twentieth 1969. So Sue and I have said before we got married, "July twentieth it'll be one small leap for man, one giant leap for Hal and Sue."

[Laughs]. Anyhow just to coincide with that, it's always good to get married on some memorable event.

**ARSENEAULT:**      You picked that day on purpose?

**MCMILLIN:**      No, it just happened but it's the lunar landing so. . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      It's romantic still . . .

**MCMILLIN:**      [1:15:07] Yeah, we always have a great . . . always pick about the same day as the lunar landing. But good family growing up. Wanted to make sure I got Mom, Dad, Mackie my older brother who passed away. Of course Mickey's still doing well and very active in community. Very . . . he's a retired plumbing contractor. He took over my dad's business after my dad had passed away. And one thing that I . . . you talk about life lessons and I'll try to get through this without choking up, but my dad actually died in my arms. He had a heart attack and Mom called me. We lived around the corner from him. That was probably the most major growing event of my life. Got over there and did CPR. I worked at the plant and you go in for those CPR class and you think you're not listening, but when you have to use it, all that stuff kind of comes back to you. He had a heart fibulation. He actually probably died on June thirtieth. They were able to . . . Because of what we did with the CPR, get his heart back restarted at the



hospital in . . . They unplugged the machine on the fourth of July. He didn't have any EEGs and the doctor, who was a duck hunting buddy of mine, a cardiologist named Carl [Fatsterbin?] said, hey look the family doesn't have to make any decisions.

I know what my dad would have wanted, who was a hard-working guy. In fact, the day he passed away that Saturday night, he had roughed in a couple houses. Him and Ernest had roughed in a couple houses. He had a good day because he loved to work and he kind of died in his boots that night. But that was probably the number one most biggest growing experience that I've ever had in my life because it taught me how short life is and how final death is. That was kind of the moment that I started changing a few things in my life and started pursuing things that I really wanted to do or I hadn't done; been putting off. So . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:17:03] How old were you?

**MCMILLIN:**      Twenty-eight. I was twenty-eight, yeah. So big moments. Later things change. Went through divorce after that. Worked at Sasol. That was in '85. I stayed there a few more years. Kind of said, hey I've enjoyed this working in the plants. Now I want to pursue something that I could do outside the plants. And that's where I went into business development. But that was a big moment.

Lost my mom February twenty-eighth of this year. She was ninety-three years old. Her body just wore out. It was just the situation. The greatest mom in the world just . . . At a point in time that it almost gets to where you say, "Okay Lord I know she's tired. Let her go see Dad." So I guess really the biggest thing . . . I am spiritual so I know that they're in heaven and I'll see them one day hopefully if I mind my P's and Q's right. But the good Lord will take care of us

and I just miss both of them, so.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:18:17] They raised you in church?

**MCMILLIN:**      Yes. Raised in a Baptist church, later when I got married, Methodist church and I've been Methodist since, so. And then Mom and Dad went in the Catholic church and they were both active in that, so. Good people. And my sister Jan, she's the salt of the earth when it comes to church. She doesn't miss church. She prays for us every day. We all pray, but not like Jan. Jan prays constantly. She's a tremendous person. Of course Mickey is also . . . We're all good Christian background. We all try to do the right thing and we all know there is a hereafter and there is . . . we . . . I believe Jesus died for our sins, and he was the son of God, and that we're all going to have an opportunity to go to heaven someday, so. Look forward to that. I got a lot of friends up there already. That's one thing about Westlake being a hometown, you know everybody. I often say you know whose checks are good and whose husbands aren't [laughs]. So that's a hometown deal, but it's kind of one of those things that . . . A good part about growing up in a community. Just like Ms. Trahan knew I threw tomatoes at her car, people know your business to a degree, but there's plusses and minuses with that. I mean I love my hometown. It's a great place.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:19:37] Just curious before we get to Hurricane Rita, what do you know about Gerald Washington's death? This is something . . . I'm not from the area and it's something I kind of . . . I did interview Mrs. Lillian Washington because her children went to Mossville.

**MCMILLIN:**            [1:19:50] Gerald Washington was one of my closest friends. Gerald Washington and I got elected to the Westlake city council at the same time. We were brothers. I was excited for Gerald. Gerald and I would go on . . . they would think we were twins, okay? This is what I know about Gerald Washington and how much I loved him. This guy, also a great supervisor out at Conoco, Phillips 66 now. Everybody loved Gerald. We played on the same Conoco basketball team together . . . We were close.

We would go on conventions as city councilmen and everybody knew me and Gerald because we were both people persons. We talked to everybody. He said I promised duck hunts to people all over the world, but we'd find a common bond with them. He taught me no matter how big the convention is and how great this speaker is, go to the front. There will always be a couple seats up there. Me and Wash saw Vice President Gore, we saw Dick Cheney, and we were always within the first one or two rows because we'd find a seat. There'd be maybe one seat here, one . . . We'd ask people to push together. Me and Wash would be sitting up there. We were inseparable. We were great friends.

The morning that . . . The day that he died I saw him that morning at the convenience store, "Hey baby." "Hey Mac." "How's it going?" I said, "Good, Wash." I said, "I can't wait for you to be mayor." He'd just gotten elected mayor and stuff like this. You could have gave me a list of a hundred people, or ten, whatever. Wash would have been on the bottom of that list. He would . . . I would have never thought that he would have committed suicide, but he did. He had things undoubtedly that was bothering him that he felt like he needed to check out at the point and time he did. Broke my heart.

I was laying on the couch watching a UFC fight. Buddy of mine called me said, "Hey man Wash is dead. He killed himself." I'm like, "No." I said, "Where's Mary at?" Because Mary

was a good friend of ours. I said, "Where's Mary at?" he said, "Mossville Recreation Center." Well she wasn't at Mossville Recreation Center, she was at her house but I was going to the Mossville Recreation Center when I came by the Mossville School and saw Wash's body laying out there in the coroner in the police. So I stopped and visited with the mayor and some of the city councilmen, the fire chief, because we're all just like, "Oh my gosh." I was on the police jury at that time. I wasn't [already a?] city councilman, but Wash had helped me get elected. Wash was my right hand guy. I mean I love Wash. We were buddies. We were friends. He was somebody . . . a man of integrity that I could trust. If I had something point-counterpoint with I could get Wash's opinion I always loved it.

[1:22:41] There was conspiracy theories and different things, but if you follow the blood it was a shot to the chest, he went down, he got up, he moved, and the two different pools of blood were there, and he died. Why he did it haunts all of us. I don't know. I don't know. I hope when I see him in heaven I'm going to ask him, "Hey man why'd you do that? You left me hanging. I needed you." But a great man.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Why do you think it was at . . . this is speculation, but I'm . . .?

**MCMILLIN:**      [1:23:18] Who knows. At the school?

**ARSENEAULT:**      Yeah.

**MCMILLIN:**      Common place. I don't know. I don't know probably some . . . meant something . . . I mean that was his high school. I mean it's where he went to school.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Maybe remembering the good old days or something like that.

**MCMILLIN:**      [1:23:34] I don't know. I don't know why he just stopped his truck out there and did it . . . Just took his pistol and did it. But I was the only guy see being comfortable with all . . . people of all walks of life and especially I . . . after I went by there, I left there and I went to Wash and Mary's house. I was the only white guy there, but I was family because Wash was my best friend and I cried with Mary, and cried with his mom, and the whole family, so. I don't know why. That's . . . what . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      How did the family take it?

**MCMILLIN:**      It was killing them. It killed everybody. I mean everybody was so upset. Nobody knew why. Nobody . . . Why is this . . . it's tragic. I mean sudden loss. I was up until two o'clock in the morning, three o'clock in the morning with those guys. Sitting there and just don't know why. It was rumors somebody did it, conspiracy theories, and I don't believe any of that. It was a suicide that he decided that his own time to do it his way and check out the way he wanted to. I don't know why. But what a flamboyant good speaker. He walked into a room, he'd light it up. I mean he was six-seven, six-eight . . . good guy . . . big guy. Me and him had a lot of drinks together, played a lot of cards at the casino together, we'd go on trips. And went to all the classes, and all the conventions, and heard a lot of great speakers. That's a hole in my heart. Good guy.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:25:19] Well tell us a little about Rita. I know [Hurricane] Katrina gets

a lot of attention.

**MCMILLIN:**      Well . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      Calcasieu Parish got it hard with Rita.

**MCMILLIN:**      [1:25:26] Here's the deal it was . . . I was president of the police jury.

Had that opportunity. I've served twice as president of the police jury and [now?] as vice president. I'm vice president this year, but president of the police jury when Hurricane Katrina hit and we really mobilized to help the evacuees in New Orleans. We had a lot of them here. We had a lot of them at Burton Coliseum and we had a lot of them at the Civic Center. And the parish [on at?] Burton we kind of made sure that facility . . . We were feeding people, we were housing people, we were taking care of their needs and doing a really good job. And they were loving it because this is a good part of the world and our people had open hearts and they were really helping the people of Katrina.

And then Rita comes in to play and we have to evacuate all of those people out of the Burton Coliseum and they have to go different places, and out of the Civic Center. Evacuate them and then we had to start getting ready for evacuation. Here's what I didn't know. The president of the police jury becomes the highest ranking public official in a declared national disaster in the parish.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:26:38] Is it usually the mayor?

**MCMILLIN:**            No, it's the president of the police jury during a parish wide declared national disaster the president of the police becomes . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      Okay.

**MCMILLIN:**            [1:16:47] So I'm a part time elected official, but it suddenly thrust me into being the guy in the control of the meetings. Fortunately, we had six great mayors from six great cities. They were full time. Some of them were full time, some of them were part time. But Mayor Roach and I really became close during that because Randy's a wealth of information, an eloquent speaker, and is all about doing the right thing. I was a part time elected official, and having to lead the meetings would lead and listen, but I would also take charge of the meetings to make sure that we . . . I guess it was a great learning curve for me that when we were having the meeting nobody spoke over anyone.

          We'd call that to order quickly. Make sure that everybody's point . . . I kind of talk about that in the beginning. That everybody's point was very important and we need to listen to what everyone's point was, and please no sidebar conversations. And somebody was side barring on my conversations when we were making some really tough decisions. We'd shut that down. Say, "Hey I appreciate what you're saying over there, but we need to listen to whoever's speaking." And we got in these rooms. The core group of the mayors and the police jury and we had to make some tough decisions, but we did. And we all point-counterpointed at those point in times, but when we came out of there we came out of there in unity because the citizens of Calcasieu Parish needed decision makers to make decisions.

**ARSENEAULT:**     [1:28:20] What were some of the tough ones?

**MCMILLIN:**       Well, initially closing the schools and calling for a parish wide evacuation.

**ARSENEAULT:**     Because you didn't know if it?

**MCMILLIN:**       [1:28:29] You don't know. It's kind of bumping along the Texas southern coast and is it going to turn, or is it not? Well let's err on the side of safety.

**ARSENEAULT:**     And that's a decision . . .

**MCMILLIN:**       That was a decision that was made . . . It was made finally by the schoolboard superintendent, but that was a decision that was discussed amongst all of us. Said, "Yeah it's the right thing to do." Then we all went on T.V. Said, "Hey guys, you saw what happened." I guess that's one of the great things that we had was people three weeks earlier had seen what happened in Hurricane Katrina. So we call for mandatory evacuation of Calcasieu Parish [break in tape]. Okay go back over that. They saw what happened three weeks earlier in Hurricane Katrina. When we called for mandatory evacuation in Calcasieu Parish the people listened. They did and they evacuated. Now, it was tough because people didn't want to evacuate. It's hard to leave your home. Hard to leave all your possessions.

**ARSENEAULT:**     How do you evacuate that many people?



**MCMILLIN:**            [1:29:47] Yeah. That was the thing. And there was gridlock and there was . . . Could have been done better with contraflow and a lot of things in hindsight we could have done better, but it'd been forty-seven years, since 1957 that we had not had a hurricane. So Hurricane Audrey last . . . Cameron. So we didn't know. We were listening, but we had saw what happened to Katrina and it scared the heck out of us. So, alright we're going to get ready. We went to evacuate, everybody's together. We do that. It hit us. Direct hit. Hurricane Rita was a direct hit.

**ARSENEAULT:**        [1:30:23] Were y'all still in town when it . . . ?

**MCMILLIN:**            No, I evacuated. I actually evacuated . . . my cousin's place up above Natchez, Mississippi. They told me . . . Said, "Hal go ahead and go. We'll get you back in." So some people stayed. The OEP [Office of Emergency Preparedness] department stayed, some of the sheriff department stayed, some of the people that didn't want to evacuate stayed. Everybody I talked to that should have evacuated and didn't said, "That'll never happen to me again. That was the most scariest time in my life. I feared for my life. They said that the howling of the wind got loud, and louder, and louder. It was the scariest situation with trees snapping, and wind blowing, and not knowing if a hurricane was going to come right through whatever, so.

It was devastating. The aftermath after the hurricane came through, I came back that Sunday about noon I made it in Lafayette. And then we came from Lafayette here. I was up in Jonesville area, north Louisiana Natchez Jonesville driving home, or driving to Lafayette. I was pretty nervous. I was in some squall lines that had fifty, sixty mile an hour winds. I was thinking, "Wow maybe I left a little too soon" because that storm kind of moved up through there. Getting

home, or getting back to southwest Louisiana and seeing the impact that Hurricane Rita had done just driving was . . . Oh, my gosh. It looked like a warzone. We had been tore up bad. The numbers of . . . In hindsight with all the numbers that came in, but the numbers of debris from the old growth oak trees, and pine trees, and all the trees we had with the direct hit from Hurricane Rita was tremendous.

[1:32:15] Now, my house and my mother's house both got totaled. I had an oak tree in the middle of my house. I completely lost my house. My mom lost her house. She was this single . . . no, she had remarried my step-dad at that point in time, but they . . . Her house was devastated. So not only coming back to this massive hurricane that just did Cameron and Calcasieu Parish and all southwest Louisiana, but then to deal with a home that was destroyed and then the parish was in such bad shape that we had to do a kind of a lock down. We asked some people not to come back to Calcasieu Parish. That we're going to have to ask you not to come back until we can get our infrastructure back. Because if you come back now, we don't have our hospitals, we don't have our emergency ambulances and things . . . firetrucks. All our systems were down at this point in time. So it was kind of a situation that we asked the people not to come back. To kind of have a . . . To close the parish basically.

And then we started letting people with IDs come back in to rebuild the parish to get things back up. You had the industries that wanted to get back up. Check out their damage, get everything going back up. You had the small businesses, community stores, wanting to get back up. We needed fuel, we needed those kind of stores coming back up. We started having meetings. Working with that. I can tell you that the federal government because of the kind of egg on their face they had during Hurricane Katrina wanted to make sure they were here the day . . . right . . . that I was . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:34:07] You mean FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency]?

**MCMILLIN:**      Well yeah, everybody from there. General Honoré was here immediately. And him and I became pretty good friends during Hurricane Rita. Had a number of meetings with him, but he was helping a lot with the cattle down in Calcasieu . . . Cameron Parish. Getting those up. Getting Hackberry area that had been hit hard. Cameron had been hit hard. He was some of that, but all up in Calcasieu Parish we would have meetings. We had a wealth of resources from the federal government coming in. Water and fuel, were the two main things.

I remember General Honoré saying, “President McMillin?” I did his impersonation. He said, “President McMillin,” he said, “I’m going to tell you right now,” he said, “My men understand two things. They understand order, and they understand rank. If you need something President McMillin you tell them who you are and you give them the order.” And I’m like, oh my gosh [laughs]. I got a general . . . A three star general in the United States Army telling me to order people around. I’m like, “Well thank you general I appreciate it, but I’m probably going to go to some army colonel, or lieutenant, or captain, or whatever and get them to do it.” But he was . . . he’s like, “Whatever you need.” He said, “We’re going to make this thing work.” And he was on the spot.

[1:35:25] And then of course the senators and the congressmen came in that Tuesday after Hurricane Rita. We had a meeting with President Bush. And that was probably one of the most surreal things in my life because you . . . Three weeks earlier you’re seeing President Bush walking through New Orleans and the aftermath . . . Meeting with the governor and stuff in New Orleans with Katrina. And then now he’s here in Lake Charles and you’re in the meeting with him. So . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      What was that like?

**MCMILLIN:**      [1:35:57] That was . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      What was he like?

**MCMILLIN:**      Great. Great. I love George Bush. He was like you had just got whipped, but your big brother just walked in the room and he was fixing to take care of business for you. It was a good feeling to see President Bush there. I had . . . The night before he was coming in, [Mark?] Murry was our parish administrator. Of course we had a good group of people from all the parish right there. It had a good group of people from the parish. So I had a pre-meeting. I said, "Look," I said, "I'm going to be in this meeting with the president and although I may have been the class clown and comic in school, I've learned that I need to get real serious on some of this stuff. So make this C student in high school look like I was a banner roll or honor roll student." [Laughs]. They said, "Don't worry about it. President Bush was a C student." [Both laugh]. I said, "Well good we'll have a great rapport." No, he was very, very smart. He was very, very . . . it was just . . .

[1:37:05] To tell you a few things about that. We had some major power lines down, we had some major infrastructure road issues, things that we needed to get done. We needed more fuel, more water, we needed to get more utility companies in here not only on the major stuff, but on the local poles and things. Electricity is a big part of getting that back up and Entergy did a tremendous job in coming in and really handling up on our problems that we had after being strained through the New Orleans stuff. But our public works department, all the fire

departments, the police departments . . . we all pulled as one together. And we as leaders had an opportunity to lead, and that's something . . . I'm very proud to be a part of that team. That we did make decisions. And sometimes you base those decisions on well let's learn from past mistakes and there had been a few mistakes in Katrina so we didn't want to make any of those mistakes twice.

[1:38:03] So we would take all the information we had and we made a lot of right decisions in getting things done to get this parish back up and moving forward. We were down . . . We were knocked down. Like I told President Bush, "We're knocked to our knees right now," I said, "but we'll get back up. We'll start walking. We'll be running before long." But I was . . . it was a horseshoe . . . Kind of a square with the end out, let's just say. And president Bush was right here and Dave Paulison the FEMA director was right here, and I was sitting right here one chair away from the president. And man, you know me. I like to impersonate people. And I always liked the George Bush impersonations, but I wasn't going to do my George Bush impersonation, but I was watching him. And when he would talk and he would move I was thinking, "Wow. That guy is doing the greatest George Bush impersonation I've ever seen." And I thought, "Oh my God that is George Bush! He's right on!" He was the president of the United States sitting one chair away from me and I was like, "Wow. What a moment." This . . . it's just this doesn't happen. It doesn't happen to me. It's happening. It's surreal. And Dave Paulison is right here.

And of course we were talking expedited assistance and stuff like this. And the conversation started out, and it started going to the president's right. And the governor was there, and the senator was there, and the congressman was there, and some other mayors were there. So it started going that way, and I'm thinking, "Wow. I've got a whole list of things here that I need

to talk to the president about and I'm not going to have time." So it lulled just a minute when they was going to somebody else I said, "Mr. President, real quick." I said, "I got a quick question." I said, "I got a whole list of things here that I need to talk to you about. Are we going to have an opportunity to visit with you and this?" He looked at me like big brother. He said, "Hal," called me by my first name like he'd known me all my life. Had his sleeves rolled up. And he looked at me and said, "Hal," he said, "You don't worry. We're going to take all the time we need in this meeting. We'll make sure we get to every item that you have on that list."

[1:40:09] And then he comes back around the table and gets to me and looks over at me. He's like, "Hal what you got?" I said, "Well we have this major infrastructure. These major powerlines down right here. We . . . this is . . . We can't get the power grid going until we get these done." "General [Pratt?] I need you to get the Black Hawks down here and make sure we get those." Boy just started firing orders. Everything I had. Bam! Bam! Bam! He was the president of the United States. Most powerful man in the world right there sitting. And it was just . . . and then the FEMA number expedited assistance. Wanted to make sure that our people were going to get their two thousand dollars on expedited assistance. He said, "Hal we're going to try to get everybody that we can to get all the expedited assistance. We got all our staff working on that. We're going to do that and get that done." He was sitting right next to Dave Paulison, "Dave I want to make sure . . . FEMA make sure southwest Louisiana gets all expedited assistance. They get all the assistance they need. We don't want to get caught bottled down in bureaucracy and paperwork." It was just like, "Wow this guy is . . ."

So we met. And I remember when I got up from the table he walked over to me and grabbed me, shook my hand, then he kind of . . . Then he grabbed me by the shoulder. He said, "Hey, today's the worst day. It's going to get better from here." And it did. And when we went

out on the tarmac and they had a . . . where you talk to the press and all that. And he was so good, and knew what he was doing, and he was so genuine. I won't let people say a bad word about George Bush around me. He helped southwest Louisiana recover as quick as it could and he gave us all the firepower that we needed. And then we had really good leaders in southwest Louisiana that took charge. Whether it was from Mark McMurry our parish administrator, the mayors of all the cities, D. Gremillion of the OEP . . . Everybody was working hand in hand and it moved forward quickly.

[1:42:07] And that's why you don't hear much about Rita. And the other thing is, is the people. It's the people of southwest Louisiana. Westlake, Mossville, every community through here. We didn't want a hand out, we wanted a hand up. And once we got that hand up, then that's where we moved forward. And that's where the people . . . they said that a load of plywood would come to an area in New Orleans and people would stand there and look at, "Well what do we do with that?" A load of plywood come to southwest Louisiana the people would start unloading it on the trucks, taking it to people's houses, and repairing their roofs. The difference . . . The culture of the people of southwest Louisiana was one of the major reasons that you never heard much about Hurricane Rita.

We didn't have . . . we had really good police protection with . . . I don't remember who was working days or nights, but we'd get reports from both . . . the sheriff had maybe days, and the . . . Don Dixon the chief of police of Lake Charles, former FBI agent, had night shift. And the entire parish was being secured. They had planes flying above us with surveillance and stuff like . . . It was the safest parish in . . . or the safest place probably in the United States with all the surveillance that was over us because they had a daylight to dawn curfew. And if you really kind of stepped out of your house they were watching. I had one lady call me and say, "Hey we don't

have any police protection over her in the [Terrace?] area.” I said, “Yes ma’am you do.” I said, “You’re just not seeing them but they’re completely around you and the police would be there in a heartbeat if there was anybody outside moving around.” In fact, there’s the story of the sheriff going outside and the helicopter putting the spotlight on him at one point in time.

But the people gave us time to kind of get everything back together. Get the infrastructure needs and then the people started filtering back into the parish under the knowledge that they knew that we didn’t have fire departments and police departments. So if you’re out there cutting limbs with a chainsaw and you gash your leg open, there’s not going to be an ambulance come get you, okay? There may not be much of an emergency room, a triage area, at the hospital to take care of you. So if you come back into the parish . . .

And southwest Louisiana is made up of some great people. Some just . . . all walks of life. Black, white, creole, good old boys. And they want to take care of their stuff. And they came back and they cut limbs off their neighbor’s houses, they repaired what they needed to repair to keep any other damage from happening, emptying freezers, doing whatever they needed to do. Yeah that was one of the positive things out of this negative is we didn’t have electricity and there was a lot of people that had a lot of shrimp and fried . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:45:09] Barbeque time.

**MCMILLIN:**      Barbeque time. Steaks . . . the first couple days we ate pretty good because that stuff was going to either spoil or be eaten. So that night we had some pretty good cooks cooking some of that stuff. Wow, what a surreal time to be a part of that. One of the things that ended up happening, I didn’t have a place to stay. My house was destroyed. My wife was in



Florida with her brother and stuff like this. So I was kind of moving from place to place.

Well I ended up at the radio station, town square now radio station. They had a couch up front, but they had air conditioning because they had a . . . generator going. So they had air conditioning because man, it was hot. And I got to sleep on that red couch up front for two or three days. Well when I would do the full day of what I was doing as police juror president, I would come in and sit on the radio and visit with some of the radio disc jockeys, and visit about what was going on.

[1:46:12] Well what I didn't know . . . that was before iPhones and internet . . . radio pup or whatever, different apps you could have went on and listened to it. But people were out in their trucks and cars listening to what was going on. The information that I was giving updates on and what we were doing in the parish. And although it was a crude mode of communication, it worked. And people say, "Well Hal man I remember sitting out in the car," when they'd come back and, "We were sitting out in the car listening to you on the radio telling us all about what all was going on in the parish. And what areas . . . and what was . . . from . . . I had a number of calls from buddies. That's when I first learned about texting, too. Because they had Blackberrys and they were texting. We didn't have any communication because cell phones weren't working back then very much, but when I could get a call from somebody like, "Hey man would you ride by my house and check and see if my house is okay?" Because they couldn't come back in the parish because we had a curfew on the parish at that point in time and not letting people back in because it wasn't safe. Lot of interesting things went on. Lot of . . . really . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**     [1:47:24] Any looting problems, or anything like that?

**MCMILLIN:**            No, that's what I was going to tell you earlier. The sheriff and Don Dixon the chief of police, I think they had a crew of people come in from the Houston area that were kind of going to do some looting. And the surveillance nabbed them, caught them, probably arrested them and moved them out quickly. So quickly got back to the people that were going to come here of a criminal aspect, don't go there. They're on top of their game. Great sheriff. Great chief of police. Don Dixon and Tony Mancuso and all their sheriff department folks. We were safe. We were safe in Calcasieu Parish. You don't hear any horror stories here.

I mean I don't even think we had any deaths that were attributed to the hurricane at all. And that's because the people listened, they evacuated. Now, if I would have stayed home in my house and hid in the bathroom during the storm, that oak tree would have killed me. It came right through my bathroom. It hit my house so hard it cracked the slab on my house. And we tore that house completely down and built a brand new house right there. Had good neighbors. I didn't want to leave my neighborhood. Westlake. I love it.

**ARSENEAULT:**      [1:48:42] I know FEMA got a lot of criticism in new Orleans. Did you have kind of . . . ?

**MCMILLIN:**            No, no they did much better here. Yeah. They came to the table here. They did much better here in Calcasieu Parish. I mean it's a system of bureaucracy that has to be done so people don't abuse the system, but they paid out a lot of money. They got the money out to the people and the claims that were . . . needed to be claimed. They helped the people of Calcasieu Parish. It was incidence . . . everybody . . . you're not going to be a hundred percent . . . can't go without making mistakes, but they . . . FEMA did a good job in Calcasieu Parish. I

give them a much higher grade than what they did in New Orleans. Of course I only hearsay New Orleans.

That was one of the things I used to say when we'd have a tough decision, "Well what they do in New Orleans? Let's don't do that." Learn from their mistakes. But that was . . . They were devastated down there. We were devastated here. I think if you look in the top ten list of disasters in the United States, Rita still ranked very high up in the top ten, but you don't hear about it. And you just attribute it that yes, there was some good leadership here, but it was the people . . . It was the people that really made the difference in southwest Louisiana of all cultures. Of all races. We were one.

**ARSENEAULT:**     [1:50:09] What makes southwest Louisiana so special?

**MCMILLIN:**     It's . . . a mentality of good fun, hardworking people that are God fearing . . . It's a great place. We don't have a lot of negativity here. We don't have a lot of racial divide. We all are one. It's a gumbo. It's a melting pot of people and everybody likes having fun. Everybody likes smiling. There's a . . . Whether it's showing off their best gumbo that they can cook, or jambalaya, or having an adult beverage and smiling and laughing and listening to good Cajun music, Zydeco music, rock and roll music. This is the greatest place in the world. I love this place. I love southwest Louisiana. Its . . . I'm blessed to be here. I enjoy seeing the rest of the world, but I always love coming home. And every time I come across the I-10 Bridge and I look across whether I'm going toward Westlake and see the industries, which I always tell my kids, "Look that's our livelihood." And at night it looks like Oz. It's neat. And if you knew what all was going on out there it's really neat because there's a lot of lot of really smart things

happening in that plant to make the chemicals and the products they do to make our life much easier. Or if you're coming over into Lake Charles and you're looking out and you're looking out into the swamp, or even looking into the lake in the skyline of Lake Charles . . . I love it.

[1:51:47] And then where we're at too, I mean thirty miles to the north . . . and this is where I get back into doing my accents, but I say this, thirty miles to the north, "Hey man you can get up there to DeQuincy and them old boys love to be in them piney woods, they hunt deer with dogs, and they drink a cold beer, and just ride around their pickup trucks in the dirt roads up there and have a good time." And thirty miles to the south, "[. . .?] How y'all are? [Speaking French]." They duck hunt down there . . .

**ARSENEAULT:**      Cajun.

**MCMILLIN:**      [1:52:18] They got the Cajun culture, and the jambalaya and the gumbo, and you know what? They drinking the same beer up there as they are down there. So they're very hospitable. It's a melting pot. And I-10 cuts through the middle of us. And I'm not making fun of those voices. Those are my friends. And I can talk like the guys from DeQuincy and I can talk like the guys from Cameron Parish, which . . . Great people. Great people is what makes a difference in this area.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Well that's about all the questions that I had. I wanted to close with is there anything you wanted to add about your time serving your ward, or your childhood, or your family, or all of your extracurricular activities?

**MCMILLIN:**            Its . . . life's been good. I've been blessed with good health and I often say that although I'm sixty, I've had enough fun for a ninety year old. I have fun pretty much every day of my life. I try to not be negative although sometimes you have bad days no matter what you do, but nobody's the boss of my shoes but me. And nobody's the boss of my attitude but me. And if you could instill that into more people, that if you're not happy change your attitude. You control it. If you're not happy in those shoes, change to some other shoes. Whatever it takes to make you happy and have fun. And be good to people. Live life to the fullest. We're a small dash between 1955 dash and whatever day I die, but I'm trying to live every day to the fullest and have fun doing that.

[1:54:00] And seems like the more you take a positive attitude in life, the more positive things will happen to you. Don't dwell on the negatives. There's going to be rain showers to make those flowers grow. Don't dwell on the negatives. I hate that my dad died in my arms, I hate that I lost my mom, but I had them and I've grown from each of those situations. And just when something happens negative, try to grow from that situation to make yourself a better person. I try to be a better Hal every day. I'm not the same guy that threw tomatoes at Ms. Trahan's car. I've grown through that stage. I'm not the same guy that may have argued a call or something on a baseball field many years ago. You got to grow every day and you got to make yourself a better person. And nobody's responsible for that, but you. So it all falls back to hey, be God fearing, love the fellow man around you, try to obey the good Lord's big ten and hope you get in.

**ARSENEAULT:**        Very good. And since this is a Mossville project, how would you like Mossville to be remembered?

**MCMILLIN:**            [1:55:11] Mossville is a great community. Mossville is a hometown community. It's a bedroom community right next to the industries. It had a lot of great people. And I think really what you need to . . . not the material things of Mossville need to be . . . so much remembered as the people of Mossville. Don't let the people be forgotten. There's a lot of great folks that have come out of Mossville. I could start trying to name them, but I'd miss them. Richard Lee, we talked about earlier, great guy. Loved the rabbit hunt. Him and his brother Kenny Lee. Kenny's still around. He loves to rabbit hunt. You got a lot of great families in Mossville that have a lot of really good heritage. Coach Williams . . . and we got a road named after him. Coach Williams, a mentor to many a young man. He was a coach at our high school during some pretty rough times, but he never saw black and white. He saw hearts. So if you look at people that way, and Mossville's got a lot of great people. Remember the people of Mossville.

[1:56:11] And yes, from the growth of his area and their homes being encompassed in some of that growth we're going to miss that. But we're not going to miss our kids and grandkids who are going to be able to grow up here in Southwest Louisiana with really good jobs and opportunities. And not just jobs at Sasol. I personally work in a job that is an offshoot of the industries. And for every one industrial job, they say there's seven offshoot jobs. So they don't have to work in the plant. They can work at a restaurant that feeds people in the plant, they can work as a business development guy, they can work as a car dealership selling cars to people that work in the plant. There's so many opportunities because we have good paying jobs in southwest Louisiana.

I was talking to a senator yesterday from Monroe and he said, "My gosh. Southwest Louisiana. You guys must pray real hard down there because you're so blessed with so many opportunities." Now, there is some growing pains in these opportunities, but please don't forget

the people of Westlake, and Mossville, and all southwest Louisiana that have laid the path for us to be better stewards of this community.

And to the people that are coming, try to do the best you can to keep it going forward so thirty, forty years from now people will look at your generation and say, "Hey those people did a lot for us." Ship channels. A basic idea. Who would have thought Lake Charles needed ship channels? They thought of that many years ago and it's been a tremendous opportunity. What can I do now as an elected official here in my era that will live an impact of my community and change the quality of life and make it better for southwest Louisiana? That's what I'm trying to do. Thank y'all. God bless y'all.

**ARSENEAULT:**      Alright I think we got everything.

**[1:58:03]**

**[End Tape 4641. End Session I.]**