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Sue Greig Oral History

Interviewer: Meredith Johnston

Interview Date: October 7, 2004

Sue Greig is a native of Arkansas. She holds a bachelor's degree in Education and Nutrition and a master's degree in Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Management and in Dietetics. She and her husband moved to Manhattan, Kansas, in 1951. Greig worked in housing and food service at Kansas State University for 13 years and then served as Food Service Director for Manhattan Kansas Schools until her retirement in the 1990s. She served as President of the American School Food Service Association in 1991-1992.

MJ: We're here in Manhattan, Kansas to talk with Ms. Sue Greig and it's October 7. Ms. Greig, we thank you for doing this with us. And could you tell us a little about yourself and where you grew up?

SG: Actually I grew up in Arkansas; I'm not a native Kansan. And, by the way, there are three past-presidents who graduated from the University of Arkansas, of ASFSA. That's Shirley Watkins, Dorothy Caldwell, and myself are all native Arkansas, Arkansans I guess you'd say. But I moved here in 1951 so I've lived here longer than any place else I've lived. My husband came up here to work on his Ph.D. and then he went to work here as a professor at K-State, so we've been here ever since.

MJ: What is your earliest recollection of Child Nutrition Programs, School Lunch Programs?

SG: Actually in grade school we didn't have a School Lunch Program; it was a small town and everybody went home or brought their lunch. But when I got into high school we did have School Lunch, and it was one of the first ones where you got a few commodities. You might get oranges, you might get canned meat, you might get some things like that, but you never got a lot of things that you could make a menu out of. So a lot of people brought food into the lunchroom; we actually had a lunchroom, a cafeteria and a kitchen separate from the gym. So the people would bring food from home and cook it, and they paid the ladies I think ten cents an hour for coming and helping, or if they brought food they, you

know, paid them a little more. So they would make soup, we always milk. We always seemed to have oranges, and sometimes we'd have a sandwich, and just whatever they had to work with.

MJ: What time period would this have been?

SG: This, let's see, when I was in high school, '44. '43, '44.

MJ: How did you become involved in the Child Nutrition Profession?

SG: Well actually, I didn't seek a job in Child Nutrition; it sought me. I went and worked at the University in teaching in housing and foodservice for thirteen years. And I had three teenagers at home and I decided I needed to retire and come home. And so I retired and didn't work for a year, and then I decided, well, you know, I have all this education and all this experience so I should be doing something. You know, even though I still need to be home I still need to be doing something. So I went out to vo-tech because we have a vo-tech at the school. And I said, why don't we start a School Food Service Supervisor's, not a School Food Service, a Food Service Supervisor's program for hospitals and nursing homes, because my background is in dietetics. Because they really need to be trained and if we can start a class here and train the ones in this area it would be helpful to the hospitals and the nursing homes. So we did. And we got it ADA approved, American Dietetic Association approved, and I had to take a course for Dietetics Education. And so we started the program, and just as we were ready to start, we had the books, class, everything ready to go, and I wanted to teach it a year so that it would be approved by the American Dietetic Association. The assistant Superintendent of schools came to me and said, if you want a job in the district, then you need to be the School Food Service Director. And I said, but I want to teach this course for a year so it's qualified. He said, you can hire a dietitian to do that because they're under us, they're under the school system. We want you to be the School Food Service Director. I said, I don't know anything about School Food Service, you know, I don't really know any rules or regulations in that. He said, well, you can learn. So I went up for an interview and I went home and talked to my husband. And do you know what he said? He said, well why don't you go back to work so you have somebody else to boss around. So I thought about it and I went and talked again, and I talked to the Food Service Director and she said, oh it's not that hard. I'll get you started and all that. I said,

okay I'll try it for a year and see how it goes. Well, when I went into the office. She wasn't there all summer. When I went into the office in the fall there was no paperwork, she had everything in her head. She was a very smart person and she had everything in her head. She didn't have a list of employees, she didn't have a list of equipment, she didn't have. There was a few old menus. She didn't have a list of vendors or anything, so I really started from scratch.

MJ: Well, was there someone, a mentor, who was influential in directing you in the Child Nutrition field?

SG: Not in the Child Nutrition fields, in the Nutrition fields my home economics teacher in high school. Her name was Mrs. Hamilton, and she really took interest in each individual person and would sit down and talk about, you know, possibilities for the future. Encouraging people to go to college, which I didn't have a choice; I had to go to college. And that, I think, was probably my first influence in the home economics field.

MJ: Would you tell us, is there anything else about your educational background you want to add, on how that prepared you for the Child Nutrition, or the Nutrition profession?

SG: The nutrition. Well of course, my undergraduate degree was in nutrition, and then my graduate degree was in hotel, restaurant and institutional management and dietetics at K. State. So from there I went to work part-time for Kansas State in the housing and food service department, and I worked twenty-two hours a week. That's back when you worked forty-four hours a week. And I went to work at four in the afternoon and worked the dinner program, and then worked on Saturday so I that I could be home with my children when they were home. But we had seated service at that time. That meant everybody came to the dining room at once and sat at tables with linen tablecloths and napkins, and we brought the food out and served them. So that was a little more, little more work at night because you had to train all the waiters and waitresses. It was interesting.

MJ: Would you tell us more about your career and the positions you have held in the profession?

SG: Well, actually I, when I was waiting for my husband to get through with his degree at the University of Arkansas I worked at the student union _____ . And then when I came up here I taught school for a year because I also have a degree in education. So I taught school for a year and I decided that wasn't my profession; it was too confining. So, although I liked the teaching part of it, you know, I really enjoyed the students, but I didn't like to be confined like that. And so I didn't do that but one year, and then I went to work for the University in housing and food service. And that sort of went into a Masters degree and full-time and part-time teaching at the University.

MJ: How, how is Kansas unique from other states in regards to nutrition programs?

SG: That's one of the reasons I went back and looked at some things. It was before I started School Food Service, but there was a dietician that went in as the head of nutrition in the state of Kansas. And they're in the education department in the state of Kansas, and not in the health department or any other, they are in the education department, which is fortunate I think. Her name was Ruby _____ and she started educational programs for the cooks in the kitchen and for the Supervisors, and for Managers too, you know, if you were a Director or a Manager. So she started courses and went out into the field into various locations in the state of Kansas, she started the program. And they developed, in the department they developed the teaching materials. They went out into the different locations and would hire degreed people to teach courses to people. That eventually evolved into a long-distance curriculum from the University. They teach _____ programs out of the various locations. And there are also professors at the University, maybe you know _____, she has done some of this. And in the summertime they go to various locations in the state and they teach certain courses. They teach management, various cooking courses, baking, fruits and vegetables, and nutrition.

MJ: And who would attend these courses? Are they open to?

SG: It's open to anyone that's working in School Food Service. Well, anybody could go, I mean, a teacher would be qualified to go if they wanted to. And once in a while you have someone, maybe a secretary who has to do something for School Food Service, some of them might go as well. But they've had several of

them here. In fact, I've taught several of them. So that, I think, really to me that's one of the most important things they do. They do a lot of other things; they have other outreach programs and that's why I went and looked up to see what they're doing now because it's been a while since I've been in School Food Service. But these are just some of the things, like what's new in the field. Food safety, body _____, in other words, your own body and exercise and that sort of thing. And then what they have in training resources, then they have the School of Health. How you can coordinate the School of Health as part of classroom work. And then Team Nutrition means teaming up not just with the health people, but with the teachers, students, and going into the classrooms. And that's one of my, that was one of my main focuses was I did the classroom. And then other sites, which would be education at other sites, and what their mission is and what their team does. So those are just some of the things that they do in their workshops and in their outreach. And we've had, when we got Nutrition Education money, which we don't anymore. I mean, they get some but it stays in the State Department and they have a training person there that they use the money for, which is really good. Kansas did a good job distributing that money. One reason I know, Missouri gave theirs all to the dairy department or the dairy people. But Rita Hammond (?) was in charge when that came and she said, no, we're going to, this is going to be just for School Food Service. We are going to see that what this money is used for benefits the children in School Lunch Programs. So she did a good job distributing the money and, as I said, education is one of my, was one of my strong points. And I said if I am going to feed these children, I am going to teach them as well. I guess that was my teacher background coming out. And so the first thing I did was to go, once I got the office straightened out a little bit, was to go to the principal at the high school and I said, I want to go to your student council. It is the only body I know where students have some say about anything in the whole district, and I want to talk to them about starting a School Food Service council for students. And he said okay so I went and they were really interested in doing something like that; it surprised me. I got some really good students to start with and we sat down and we wrote some guidelines about what we were going to do. And, of course, I always wanted to do a survey so we wrote a survey and took it to the University got it approved. And so we did that, and then they wanted to come into the kitchen. I said great. So they came into the kitchen and I said, you go over the things that kids like and the things they don't like and let's see if we can eliminate some things or if we can fix some things. We still make all of our own bread by the way,

and that was one of the things they complained about. Well we got commodities in those days; we don't anymore but we did then. And they put bubble (?) wheat and stuff in the bread and the kids didn't like it. So I said, well let's start over. Let's go back to a basic bread formula and, I could get some from the University, and we'll try that. And you test it, we'll test it and you test it and see how you like it; well they liked it. The bread is good, fresh bread is good. And so we started from there and we ended up with student councils in every school, every school district. Not just the high schools and middle schools, but the grade schools as well. We didn't start till the fourth grade, we did the fourth grade up. And once a year their officers would come to the high school and we would have dinner for them, and we would discuss things. And then we started testing products; the vendors would bring products then and we would do testing, really did blind testing with the products. And the teachers wanted to come so we would have advisors from each group come plus a random selection of high school teachers to come to help us test. And then we would choose, buy the products that they came out with the best score for. So they liked that, they liked that. And we took the Nutrition Education money and developed our own curriculum. We got twenty-five thousand dollars and we paid teachers to come in in the summer, and we worked for six weeks with them developing the curriculum. And then we went to the University, we had another grant, so we went to the University and had the curriculum director from the College of Education and the nutrition person from the Department of Nutrition and Home Economics, which is now _____, to teach the course along with my Nutrition Education person. So the three of them team-taught these same teachers how to develop lesson plans based on the curriculum. Then, then the hard part, that was the easy part. We got more money through the Education Department, not, the national Education, not the state. And we had those teachers come back after they had taught this curriculum a year and reevaluate it and rewrite it. But then in the meantime, as I said, the hard part was taking pictures and getting the props together in order to teach this to students who can't read, and even students who can read. But we did, we looked for pictures. We went to USDA, we went everywhere looking for pictures, food pictures and groups of pictures. We couldn't find anything so we made our own, and that was really hard; food photography is very difficult. We wanted to teach the basic, five basic nutrients is how we taught it, and so we had to get groups of food that would demonstrate the vitamins, that would demonstrate carbohydrates, that would demonstrate protein. And so there was a photographic firm in what we call Aggieville, a little

town right off the campus. And he was a very good photographer and I knew that, so we went to him and we said, he was retired, and we said would you come back and do this food photography for us because we're novices. We'll get the food; we'll do whatever you say, but you need to do it. And he did it voluntarily. So, I say we had to beg, borrow and steal to get all of this put together. We had to do it in seasons because we couldn't get the pumpkins and the red peppers and stuff like that, you know, together until fall. So we got it all together and all the merchants in Aggieville were very good to help us. There was a store there that sold all kinds of dishes and tableware and that sort of thing, and she loaned us tableware and napkins and placemats. And so we taught by color, like meat was red of course, the limas were green if you think of that. So she loaned us placemats and napkins that were trimmed in red or green or orange or yellow, so everything coordinated in that picture. In fact I've got some I can show you. And then we made little props, we called the pillows, but they were shapes and they were shaped like a sunshine, you know, for Vitamin D. And building blocks for the minerals and red was, protein was a building block. But they all had handles and they all had faces and hands and legs so the little kids could relate to them.

MJ: What time period would this have been?

SG: Let's see, in the sixties. It took quite a while to do this.

MJ: Now were the parents involved with any of these things?

SG: No, I had a parent committee that went through, but they didn't involve in the development, just the teachers and the university. So that, I said, we've got a lot of people involved; we've even got people in Kansas City involved. So it was quite a project and it turned out really well. We had instruction books for each teacher and then the library kept the props for them. We thought we would maybe go through like maybe sixth grade with all the props, and we also had costumes that the students. We had a play written and one of the teachers wrote the music for it, and they had this play. And we thought that would maybe go through sixth grade, maybe. Well, we got to junior high and they'd have a home economics class and they'd want to know where their props were, so we had to make some from for junior high school.

MJ: That's wonderful that the students were involved in that way, that they were actually interested in being involved.

SG: Yes, yes it worked out really well. And I did have two nutrition people that one of them went into the classrooms and taught. If the teacher didn't want to teach it, we did it. Anyway, that was my main aim, and then to get the women. I started with the women, actually students, but I thought they needed to be not just educated in food production but educated in providing for themselves. In other words, when we would go to conference they would come with cash in their hand and pay the motel bill and not even ask for a receipt. They would take their check home and give it to their husband and never see any of the money, so to speak. And so there was a lot of teaching there, and they had time cards in the beginning and no benefits, none at all. No sick leave, no retirement, nothing, and so that education had to start at the bottom and build up. They had to be able to trust me and my staff to guide them in the right direction. And so we had some other people come in and talk to them. We had a couple of attorneys that came in and talked to them, a couple of bankers that came in and talked to them, some payroll people, you know, what benefits were there in the district that they could have because they worked for the state like everybody else. But nobody ever told them that, so we had to find an education program.

MJ: So they were eligible but they just, just didn't know that they were.

SG: No. Well, and see, the state puts money in too, and if you invest in this for ten years then you get not only your share but the state's share back too. So it's a good retirement program and, but that took awhile because they, they were afraid to take charge, I guess is what they say. But the state does a good job with training, training these people. And I think they feel good about themselves when they, I did demand that they have either have a high school education or go and work on their GEDs. So, I had a number that did not have a high school education and they went and worked on their GEDs, and they were so proud, and their families were so proud that they earned their GEDs. So, it was that kind of a training program for many years.

MJ: Would you tell us about your time as President of ASFSA?

SG: Well that was a little bit, I came into that through not my own bidding also. I was going to retire, I was going to retire early because my husband had retired and I wanted to travel with him. Now I wanted to travel more than he did, but I wanted to travel and so I said, I'm going to retire early and so I need to, I need to, you know, let my people know ahead of time. Well so, I don't know who it was that called me. I think it was whoever the Director was; whoever the Executive Director was, they called me and said, the Board has, thinks they want you to run for President. And I said well, I don't think I can do that because I want to work one more semester until I get the computer program set up on the schools. It's going to take me another semester to get that done, and then I'm going to retire in January. And so the rules said they have to be active if they're President. Well, the Board got together and changed the rules. And I wasn't sure, I still wasn't sure. I said, you know, I really, I just want to do something different, and they said well this will be different, this will be different. And Josephine Martin was one of those that called me. I think it was Josephine and, anyway several of the past Presidents called me, and Clarice Higgins was one of them, and they called me and they talked to me. And I said, I just really, I mean, that's kind of a tough job, you know you have to be gone so much and you have to make speeches everywhere. I don't really know that I want to do that. Anyway, after the Board decided I said okay, and I didn't think, being from a small state, that I would win because, you know, there's not that many votes in Kansas; I won. So I went in, and I was still working at that time, so I went in and I said. I told the Superintendent that I was, if it was okay if I put my name in and he said yes. And so I went in and I stuck my head in the door and he said, you won. I said, yes. He said, I knew you would. Anyway, that was how I got into the School Food Service part. And I was the first Vice President; I was the first Vice President. They started that year and so I actually didn't start until the middle of the year as Vice President, so I had a half-year as Vice President, a year as President-Elect, and a year as President. Then you go and you're the head of the Foundation and I spent two years at that because they really didn't have it set up as a Foundation, and so we worked on the framework for that.

MJ: How did that go? Can you tell us more about that?

SG: About the Foundation or the Presidency?

MJ: Well, both. Sorry.

SG: The Foundation has been there for a long time; it's not that they hadn't had a Foundation. And they began to get some scholarship money from industry and, you know, there's some really strong industry people that tend to give to School Food Service, so this was a good way to really get going. And they hired a director, a Foundation director which they really hadn't had before and that's how we got separated out. And then it needed to be set up as a Foundation separate from the Association, which it really hadn't been before. So basically that's what we were doing, setting it up and looking for scholarship money, and developing guidelines for scholarships.

MJ: Have any major events happened during your time as President?

SG: Yes, I can't say it was all good. One of the things Shirley Watkins told me when I was debating about whether to run or not. I said, I just don't like going around from place to place writing speeches. I said, you have to get ready and you have to write a speech. No, she said, you just write one basic speech and then you just change it a little bit. Not true; you have to call the state and get information about the state. You can't just go to a state and not talk about the state. So it wasn't always. Anyway, back to the Association. By the time I got, began as President we had run out of money; there was no money. They had money when they sold the old plant in Denver, they had money from that they never used. They used some of it in the transition but there was money there and it was set aside, but it wasn't set aside for the Foundation. It was set aside for the Association. So when I, the first, the very first meeting I had, the person that was in charge of budgets, the actual budget at the Association headquarters said, we are out of money. And I said, what do you mean you're out of money? You don't have any money? And he said no, I don't even think we can meet our payroll. And I said well, we have some work to do don't we. So I said, we have to borrow that money but it is going to be set up as a loan because we're not going to take that money and just use it for the Association, to run the Association. We're not going to use it. So he set up the papers and we had an attorney and we set up the papers, and we borrowed the money. Then I said, well obviously we have to quit doing some of the things we're doing; we can't spend money. So we cut out some meetings and we did some, you know, teleconferencing type things instead of everybody flying someplace. We just cut back on activities. And then, when

Lynn McPherson came after me, she did the same thing. So in two years they had it all taken care of. But that was my biggest thing I guess, that and traveling.

MJ: Any traveling stories come to mind? Every time I talk to people they always have some traveling story, something that's happened to them that's very memorable.

SG: Well, when you're in the air all the time you've got to have some kind of problem. I remember one time we were going to, we were going to Dallas. I don't know where we were, where I was flying from, but we were going to Dallas. And we hit a thunderstorm over Dallas, and they have real thunderstorms down there. And we kept going around and going around and the pilot kept on saying well, we just don't have clearance to land yet. And pretty soon we hit an air pocket and just dropped like that, you know, and everything flew up in the air and there was this silence. And then all of the sudden this message—Yeeehoooo! Of course that broke the tension then, but we never did land in Dallas; we had to go to Houston.

MJ: Well that was eventful. Anything else you want to add about your time as President of ASFSA?

SG: Oh, I made some really good friends. I must say, School Food Service people are the best people in the world. They're so kind and so sharing and helpful, and you just meet these people and they're just your best friend all of a sudden. You know, they're just really kind and sharing. That's one thing that's different with industry that's different with School Food Service People. Industry, of course, doesn't share because they develop their own things and they pay money to get that developed. But anything a School Food Service person develops they're willing to share. I mean, they're happy to help you with whatever problem you're having. So that's probably the best thing that happened to me during that time of traveling. And then I got to go some places that I hadn't been before, and do some things I hadn't done before. So it was very educational.

MJ: What changes have you seen in the Child Nutrition Profession over the years?

SG: Oh my, a lot. When you think back in the forties in, it was right after World War II. That was when they just started the School Food Service Act. You know, it came in the forties, and so that was probably the biggest change. And then, everything changes every year. I mean, they change the regulations every year so every year you've got a new set of regulations to deal with. And that was a very difficult thing when I first started. They had a milk program, they gave milk, and then in the middle of the program, in the middle of the year they decided they weren't going to and how do you explain that to people. You know, and so it's really, a lot of changes, lot of changes.

MJ: What changes in training have you seen?

SG: Oh, a lot of changes in training. For one thing ASFSA has, you know, a lot of training goes on through ASFSA, a lot of scholarship things that go on, so that has changed at that level. And then, of course I only know about the state, and they certainly have done a good job with their training programs here in the state. In fact, I just got a set of books last spring from them about their new training materials, so they're still going strong.

MJ: Any changes? Well, what are some of the major changes in the equipment, how has the equipment changed?

SG: Well, I guess the biggest change is computers. Computer accounting, you know, at the serving line. And that was one of the things that I wanted to do before I left was to set up the computer system so that orders could come from the kitchens straight to the computer, print it out, and go straight to the warehouse. And the costing could be done and all that. Also it was to take away some of their paperwork in that, you know, you have to account for every ounce of food you put out for every individual student. Some of that kind of tedious work. You know, recipe changes, any kind of new thing that would come on the market that you want to know about, those type of things. And now, of course, you can send your information directly to the State Department so you don't have to do stacks of paperwork to send; you can go online and send all this. So that's probably the major change is, you know, accounting for all this. And, as I said, I enjoyed the computers so, in fact, one other lady and I wrote a computer book for School Food Service people. It's a manual really on how to, how to go about starting a computer program that is for School Food Service.

MJ: What's the title of this?

SG: It's *Beginning Computers* is all it is, *Beginning Computers*. But it's really a manual; it has copies of types of letters you can write, contacts you need to make, different companies that provide a certain kind of equipment, a little lesson plan on how to work with your cooks and managers, all that sort of stuff.

MJ: What do you think has been your most significant contribution to the Child Nutrition or Nutrition field?

SG: Probably education, because I just think people, when they feel good about themselves, when they feel confident in what they're doing because they know how to do it quickly, how to do it efficiently. I think they feel better about themselves and they do a better job, they're happier in their job. It just makes a better atmosphere for the whole group.

MJ: Any other memorable stories come to mind from your career?

SG: There's so many. My first experience with commodities is probably a good one because I didn't know anything about commodities. Well, I didn't know anything about School Food Service so naturally I didn't know anything about commodities. The first three years I was in School Food Service we had commodities, and then after that we got cash. So we've gotten cash ever since. I don't understand why anybody doesn't want cash; some people don't. They don't understand why we want cash in Kansas since it's an agricultural state. But I said, I can buy my ground beef in Kansas, Kansas ground beef, cheaper than USDA can buy it and send it to me, so why wouldn't I want to take money and buy Kansas ground beef. Because, you know, and I had my flour coming from the University, _____ University. So why wouldn't I rather get money and buy stuff that's from here rather than having the government buy it? But that was probably my biggest headache was commodities because I inherited a whole cooler full of rice and a shelf full of canned grapefruit juice. What do you do with all that?

MJ: That was my next question.

SG: You can't throw it away, you can't give it away, so what do you do? Well, we did throw it away. I said, tell me what the value of it is to the State Department, tell me what the value is we were paying for it _____. It's not fit to eat; it had been there for years. It just wasn't, you know, it wasn't any good anymore. So just get rid of it; that was my solution. But that was difficult, that and dealing with commodities period. We were supposed to get frankfurters in the fall. The state was going to get all of these frankfurters and you had to take your portion of them. Well they didn't come until April, and you were supposed to use them by the end of the year. So my business manager kept teasing me about having frankfurter soup and frankfurter sandwiches. But we did have a Summer Program. We had two Breakfast Programs and we started breakfasts in all schools, and we started Summer Feeding Programs and so we could use them over the summer, so we managed to use them, so. But there were several stories like that about commodities. I was happy not to have commodities anymore.

MJ: Anything else you'd like to add?

SG: No, I just think that School Food Service does a really good job in Kansas. I really can only speak for Kansas as far as education is concerned, but I think education went clear into the classroom. As I said, we do have a parent committee that this all came past so that they knew what we were doing. And the more people know about, the more that the students know, the teachers know, the parents know, and the administrators know about School Food Service, the more improvements they have to offer. When I first started, I started going to all the administrator meetings and principals were really bitter some of them, against School Food Service; called them all kinds of problems. And I said, we're not part of the problem, we're part of the solution. And just keep saying that to yourself, we are part of the solution. And just don't worry about it, we'll take care of it and we did. We did all of the, took away all of the money that they had to handle. They didn't want to be handing money anyway and so we took that away from them, we had cashiers in all the schools, so they didn't have to worry about School Food Service.

MJ: Well thank you very much for allowing us to interview you today.

SG: Well, I'm so glad that you came all this way just to talk to me. I could talk forever about School Food Service. But it was really my second career I guess you

could say, because it was not my choice as a career, and it turned out to be the one I worked at the most years.

MJ: That's the story I hear from so many people that I'm interviewing, that the career found them.

SG: Yeah, it found me. It was frustrating. The first three years were very frustrating, and if I hadn't had the University I'm not sure I would have made it. Because they did come and I, I said. I went in the Superintendent's office and I said, people just come in with bags of money and I don't know what it is, or where it's from or what's going on. And these time cards come in and I don't know what to do with them. He said, you think that's bad. He said, let me tell you something about money. When I came in as Superintendent I opened my closet up and here were gallon glass jars of money, this for this group and this for this group. I said, well it's not going to be like that for me. We're going to have my own bank account my own, I'm going to take care of everything myself. So I went over the business school and I said, I need two graduate students to come help me set up a set of books and a payroll. And so these two young men came in and they said, oh well tell us what your problem is and we'll fix it. I said I don't have a problem that needs to be fixed, I just need some bookkeeping. They said, oh well that's no problem. I said, I don't want any of this complicated double-interest stuff; I just want straightforward. And so they set up all my books for me and my payroll for me. And then I didn't know what equipment so I had people from institutional management come by, students, and go into the kitchens and write the, you know, they model numbers and everything off of every piece of equipment. And to ask the cooks when it came into the kitchen and about how much they thought was paid for it, but they had no idea what was paid for it. So I just had to take from new and go back that number of years depreciated to get the value. But you can't make menus unless you know what equipment you have so they did all the equipment, and then they did, another group came in and did job descriptions. They followed the cooks around and did job descriptions. And it really was interesting because some of them really didn't do anything.

MJ: Oh, my goodness.

SG: We had a lot of help back in those days. And I was fortunate in that mind in that they built a dam up here. Well actually they built two; they built one on the

Kansas River and one here on the Blue River and this is called Tub Creek, and that is called Mill Creek. And when they built the dam they took out a lot of farmland, a whole community and a lot of farmland. And those farm people came into town with no basic skills except farming, and so those women came into School Food Service. And so I had, really was blessed as far as labor was concerned, didn't even really have a major problem. Some of the part-time you do, particularly if you only want two hours it's really difficult. So you have to give them two different jobs, maybe, to get past that. But I did not have a labor problem not having enough, I had too much. So, I guess that's a blessing, not a problem. But I did leave before there was any major problem. Of course, not being a large city, I think we tend to get more people since we have farming here, and a University here. There are more wives that are willing to work, because they had children and they could be, they work with their children at the school. And I kept telling everybody when they'd come for an interview; this is an ideal job. You know, to come and if your children eat school lunches see them during the noon hour, you're home early afternoon before they get home from school. So it really was not a problem while I was in School Food Service, so we had a good _____, and I expect _____. But, equipment was not my thing but it was something I had to get into. There's not been that much change in equipment as far as large equipment for kitchens. Well, there is, there was for me because they still had cook stoves, you know, so we got rid of our cook stoves. And the YAC groups [pronounced yak] as we called them, Youth Advisory groups, they would come in. They had back-to-school night at the middle school and at the high schools. And they would come in and say, if you're going to come and have cookies and punch and coffee in the cafeteria for your lunch break, you have to come into the kitchen. And they would take them into the kitchen and tell them about the equipment.

MJ: The students would. That's neat. Well, when did you get convection ovens?

SG: Probably not until I had been there five or six years because, I started to work in '73. They were on the market, but nobody had any, but if you'd go to trade shows you could see them. And we had the old stacked, stacked ovens; they cooked really good, but you got commodity turkeys and you couldn't get a whole turkey into one.

MJ: Oh no. What did you do?

SG: We sent them to the meat plant and had them cut in half.

MJ: Okay.

SG: Frozen, they were frozen so they _____, they cut them for us frozen. So, that was commodity turkeys. Now they don't send them out like that, even the commodities; they send the turkey _____. So, but it was, yeah, I had to figure it out. The first time I went down to a middle school kitchen, just when they first started cooking, I visited. I called myself a walk-around manager because I always walked around every day into all the kitchens; not all of them but most of them. And I walked in and this lady who was a Manager down there was up on a ladder in the attic. And I said, what are you doing? She said, well this is our storeroom. And I said, you have got to be kidding.

MJ: In the attic.

SG: I said, that's not going to happen. I said, we're going to get the custodians in to get that stuff out of there because you're not going to do that anymore. And they were feeding students, they had holes in the wall I called them, windows they would open up. But it was not very big, it was only about like this [indicates an approximately 3' by 3' square]. And they had this long table and they'd set the pan on the table, pan in the middle of the table, and they'd shove the trays out the hole in the wall. That's no way to feed people, you know! That's really awful. So we cut the hole and made a big door and we bought cafeteria serving line _____, so the kids could see the food and see the people, talk to them. We did a lot of changes in service because we had custom-made service, salad bars for the young students. And now they're making them but we had to have them custom-made back then. And they would put things like all kind of vegetables, even asparagus and turnip slices and. Not all of that together but they would always have carrots and celery and cherry tomatoes and stuff. But then they would put ranch dip out so they could dip, and they would take that, they would take that. And we put the bread out there because we figured, you know, if they wanted more bread they could come back and get it. So we put the bread out there and all the vegetables that they could pick up and foods that they could pick up. And they would eat it. If they can pick it up and take it, they'll eat it. Where as you stick it on the tray and shove it at them they may not eat it. But,

you know, that type of thing has, a lot of changes have come in that way and I think most people, most schools, are doing that now. If there's any facility, way to do it all, leaving things out. You know, we had the salad bars in our schools and soup kettles in secondary schools. They, you know, at the high school you had maybe _____ choices. You always had pizza, you always had burritos, you know. But we didn't serve any junk food; we didn't serve any potato chips. The only thing we had at the high school that the School Board balked at were two soft-serve ice cream machines. And I said, well, we're going to have those. We're going to have a formula made so that they get their milk equivalent. So one of the dairies worked with me and we fortified the mix so that we, they get their milk equivalent through ice cream.

MJ: That's really a lot of cooperation.

SG: Yes, oh yes. I didn't have any problem getting any vendors or. When we got commodity orange juice I had it stopped in Kansas City and had them package it for me there, and then ship it out again _____. So, yeah, you just have to go looking for people and they'll help you. I didn't have anybody not want to help me if they could. So it was really, it was really an interesting job because there's so many outreach areas you can go besides providing food for breakfast and lunch, or snacks, or wherever. We did some catering and when they would ask, you mean School Food Service can cater? I said, we can do better than anybody in town and it's fresher, because we had the equipment. We have the shipping equipment and we have the cooks with the knowledge of good food, we buy good products so you have good food. So we know that we can do catering better than anybody else. So all the teachers, when they would have any reason for catering they would always come to us. And back to school nights, so the YACs could make money, we, we would make bread for them. They would pay for the ingredients so there wouldn't be any quarrel, it was their money. And then ladies would donate the labor. And we made cinnamon rolls and French bread, and Italian bread, and dinner rolls, and cookies, and all the baked goods, and they would sell them. People would come back and buy their bread and stuff before they went to class because they were afraid they wouldn't get it when they came to lunch. And they are just now getting back into it. They had to stop for awhile; there was some federal regulation. I didn't know that, and so I said, well if it's the State Department I'm going to talk to Jody about that because that's really a way to have some income and really served the community. And

then I went to a meeting in Des Moines; it was a National Food Conference up there and I went up there. And George Breddy was there from USDA and I said, is that a USDA regulation? He said, well yeah, sort of. It applies as that. I said, well it needs to be changed. But that was because people might of, they thought people used commodities. Well, cash is the same as commodities so I can't say we weren't using commodities, but you don't use those things. You make sure that the money goes back in, that you don't use it for something else, that it goes back into the food. So, if they get commodity money food it goes back into the food for the students, so it's not as if we're just making money. School Food Service doesn't make money.

MJ: Yeah, I'm learning that.

SG: So, it's a way of doing a better job for the students. And, you know, it really, it does the PR job for School Food Service. And that may be the best thing it does, is the PR job it does, because the food is good, it's fresh. And I know _____ did a lot; she had a catering person and they were doing a really good job at it, so maybe she can get back into it. I do a lot of cooks' type work at our church and so I said, I really hate it because I get my bread from School Food Service for dinners up there.

MJ: Well, you've got the recipes though I guess.

SG: Well, I don't make yeast breads when I have to bake up there; I usually make a quick bread. So, that's about the limit. It just takes too long to make that much yeast bread; it takes all day. When you're doing everything else that's too much. I don't do it by myself; it's still a lot of work. We've got a youth rally up there this weekend for a hundred and fifty.

MJ: My goodness

SG: But my job is making coffee cakes and cupcakes. So that's going to be my day's work.

MJ: Anything else you'd like to add?

SG: No, I just, I think that everybody you talk to, all the persons you talk to are going to say that this is one of the best professions there is for service. And I think people who get into the service area, and a lot of women do whether they're nurses or dieticians or School Food Service, they're service oriented people and they really want to serve people. This is one of the best areas and it's sort of unknown; so many people don't know about it. I know that the dieticians would, but School Food Service people who are dieticians, there is an organization of that and they started internships in some of the larger schools. I know there's one in Phoenix, I know there's one in Florida, I don't know where else they are but they're internships for students, college students to come intern there and go into School Food Service. And I think the more you put thesis people in who are confident and educated, that they're going to do more to publicize School Food Service as a good cause and a good profession. It really is, so. I know that the, let's see, _____ has come in as chairman of that particular group in ADA, and she's from the Phoenix area, and she has internships, so. They're moving in the right direction.

MJ: Well, thank you very much for letting us interview you today.

SG: Well, like I said, I'm glad that you've come all this distance. Did you come all the way from Mississippi too?

MJ: I picked her up from Memphis.

SG: A Tennessean. I had a sister who lived in Tennessee for a number of years. We did that traveling with our children. We did the southern route up to Washington, D.C. and back and then the northern route out to California and then the Southern route back.

MJ: Well you know, Shirley Watkins was Director in the Memphis City Schools.

SG: Yes she was. She's the one that really got things going. She started, I started in education and she started on the. Really she did this recipe book that had pictures in it so that you not only knew how to put stuff together, but you see a picture of how it's to look like when you get through with it. And she did a really good job of that. My thing was education and equipment, which I did a book on equipment.

MJ: What was the title of that?

SG: Well, it's not a book.

MJ: Oh, the manual, the manual.

SG: Yeah, it's a manual-type book, so it's on equipment. I learned a lot about equipment.

MJ: But, yeah it was really interesting [tape cuts off].