

Shelbyville Main Street Project

An Oral History Project of Shelbyville, Kentucky's Main Street

Interviewer: Mark Mefford
Date: 8-23-95

Interviewee: Duanne B. Puckett
Running Time: 37 minutes

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**DUANNE PUCKETT
INTERVIEW**

August 23, 1995

Interviewed by Mark Meford

Transcription by Susan McMullan Groves

Full name: Duanne Bondurant Puckett

Born in April 3, 1950 in Shelbyville, Kentucky to Ella Mae Terry Puckett, originally from Grayson County, and father was Jesse Louis Puckett, a native of Shelby County. Both parents are deceased. (Grayson County is the Leitchfield, Clarkson area).

How did your parents meet? My mother and her mother and two sisters and brother moved to Clarkson when mother was about 10 yrs. old--their father had died. And then they moved to Louisville when their father died and they met on a blind date, March 9, 1934 and Daddy knew at that moment that that was the girl he was going to marry. They dated 4 years and then married September 10, 1938. They were able to celebrate their 50th anniversary and mother died the year of their 54th anniversary.

What did your father do for a living? Dad originally was a cutter for Lee-McClain, which is a clothing factory in town that started in the early turn of the century, and then he married Mother and was then drafted into WW2. When he came home in '49, he and his brother opened a men's clothing store called Puckett's Men Shop. He operated that until '71 but during that time frame, he was a councilman for the City of Shelbyville for two years and then he was the mayor of the City of Shelbyville for 12 years. When he closed the business he became City Clerk and worked for fifteen years. So, he had a "politician" background!

Did your mother work? She worked alongside him at the store, and then when he became city clerk, she was one of the deputies in the office. Otherwise, she was just active at home and in school with us.

Do you have any brothers and sisters? Two sisters. I have a sister, Terri, who is married to Kent Long; and I have sister named Marsha and her last name is James, but she is divorced.

Do they still live in the Shelbyville area? Right, we all work for the same newspaper company. This was a quirk that was not planned by us by any means. Terri is the administrative assistant for Landmark Community Newspapers, which owns the Sentinel-News and 36 other newspapers. Marsha is general manager of Landmark Web Press and Standard Publishing in Shepherdsville...so she runs two printing plants. So, we all work under the same umbrella, but just different divisions.

What is your occupation? I am editor of the Sentinel News, a twice weekly newspaper based here in Shelbyville.

Is it the only newspaper here in Shelbyville? The only one! There used to be two. We were the Shelby News and the Shelby Sentinel. I'd like to say that I have those dates memorized but I don't. One started in 1840 and one in 1858, but don't quote me! They both came out on Thursdays and I worked for the Shelby News. In 1972, we merged with the Shelby Sentinel and we've been coming out ever since as the Sentinel News.

How big of circulation does it have? We have about 7,700.

Tell me a little bit about your memories of the downtown area when you were growing up. Did you all do your shopping there or what drew you down there?

Dad's store being downtown--we lived downtown! Stores in Shelbyville in those days did not close at 5:00pm. I can remember staying there, especially on Saturdays, till 8:00 or 9:00 and all the farmers would come to town and buy there work clothes and work boots. All of us grew up at the store! Daddy had a little cot in the back if we needed a nap--in his office--and we would camp out there. As we grew up into our teen years when you KNEW that's where you were on holidays and spring breaks...us working at the store. There were two other men's clothing stores in Shelbyville at the time in competition with Dad, but surprisingly enough all three flourished and none was having to be forced out by the others, by any means. Downtown also attracted me because we had a picture show! That's what we called it! The Shelby Theater was in the heart of town and it was wonderful. It was a quarter and we got to go on Saturdays and it was just wonderful! Some of the best memories we had of going down there and they always had the cartoons first and then the highlight of the movie, whatever it was, the matinee. One of funniest memories was when "The Fly" was being introduced on the movie screen and they had somebody ride through town in a big convertible with that fly head on to attract you to go to the movie. To this day, whenever we hear reruns about that old Vincent Price movie being on TV, my sister, Marsha and I--we're 18 months apart so we're a lot closer--we die laughing cause we can remember standing in front of the store, holding on to Daddy's hand and being petrified as that fly went by in that car.

Did you go watch it at the movie theater? Oh, sure, wouldn't have missed it! We were scared to death. And the one thing, too, that I wrote about in my column once on how things had changed downtown, is I remember being jealous because we had to sit on the ground floor of the theater and it wasn't until many, many years later that I realized why "colored people only"...as they called them... sat upstairs. There was a sign that said "BALCONY RESERVED FOR COLOREDS" and I had a real good friend who was black and I was real jealous that I didn't get to sit up there Mitchell. I didn't understand that he HAD to sit up there. I thought he had the privileged seats. It was many years before I understood that. But there was a little restaurant next to the theater, I don't remember the name now but it was sort of like a White Castle hamburger--real square and lots of onions, little bun, hot mustard--and it had stools and we could go in there first and get our hamburger and little coke and then we would go to the movies. Bailey's was on the corner of 6th and Main (where Tracy's is now) and they also had a soda fountain...it was a drug store. It had a soda fountain and Annie Self worked in there. She

made the best fried cornbread in the world, a hot fudge sundae that you would fight for, crinkled french fries, and chocolate cokes! I haven't had a chocolate coke in probably 35 years! We used to go up there and get our food to bring back to the store and eat OR we had our lunch delivered from Dewey's Pool Hall up the street. They had double-decker cheeseburgers that were full of pepper and they had small bottle coca-colas that are rarely seen much anymore. The guys would come down and deliver that to the store smelling like onions and smoke and I don't know what all and that was just a big treat for us, we thought, to see somebody from a pool hall.

Did you ever go in the pool hall? No, and I tell you I wanted to because they had always said women weren't allowed and after I started working for the newspaper--it was right across the street from where the newspaper was at the time and they always brought my lunch to me. I kept saying I was going to go there one night and just say, "Hi, I'm here, I want to be served," but I never got around to it and now they've closed. Well, I should have!

Do you ever remember any women going in there? Yes, Angie Humphrey used to be some kind of TV personality from Louisville, and when she heard Dewey's was closing and they wouldn't allow women, she scooped me and she got in there. She was real attractive and had a big Farrah Fawcett hairdo and so all those guys in there were just falling all over her. Of course, the broadcast made people in Shelbyville look like, "Who are these people" cause they were all, you know, cigarettes rolled up in there shirt, grease all over the front of them. That made downtown! But the biggest thing that attracted people to downtown was we had department stores. I guess that's really the hub of what downtowns were and we no longer have that. We had Lerman's and Lincoln's and we had Lawson's department store. Lawson's was two complexes--two buildings in one. They had furniture and baby clothes and linens, china and crystal, women's clothes; I mean, you didn't HAVE to go to Louisville unless you wanted to. We went to downtown to shop. We had a Cohen's shoes and you bought your shoes there. We had another little shop called the Town Shop that was run by Stan List. We had a lot of Jewish immigrants to Shelbyville and that was another stupidity on my part...that I didn't know that there were prejudices against Jews because they were in Kiwanis with my father and I grew up knowing them. I mean, I always knew them and Lewis Ruben was one of my best friends up until he passed away at 97. It wasn't until I was a teenager and my cousin in Louisville said something about, "They don't allow Jews in the club" or whatever and I didn't understand that. But, yeh, we had a really large Jewish population in business owners downtown Shelbyville which, of course, no longer exists either.

Were there any other businesses that stand out in your mind for any reason? Let's see, one that I didn't remember but is, of course, still real predominant was where the Bistro restaurant is. When you walk in the foyer on the tile there is a big "R" and that stands for Rothschild and that was a men's clothing store in town that was a predecessor to Briggs-Hower, which eventually became Briggs-Bemiss. But, the best story that...he also was of the Jewish faith...Lewis Ruben was full of stories and I listened to everything Lewis had to tell me and he said that Abe Rothschild had a safe in the back of the store

and he did not trust banks. And sure enough--there it is in the back of that building! I think they use it for cold storage now, but there is an honest to goodness safe. Now he told me that when Abe was in the hospital dying and on his deathbed, he was up there visiting him, he said "You know, Lewis, the only thing I regret," and Lewis was expecting some real profound statement, he said, "I can't take my money with me." So apparently, he loved every dime he made at Rothchild's! But, the other thing I was thinking about that was real hometown to me, and I took it for granted, was Colonel Sanders. I mean, he lived here and I knew him and saw him and he'd come in and sit beside you on the stools at Begley's. I've had reporters from off and on through the years that would move in from California or Kansas or Massachusetts and they really thought he was a myth...some television character. He was not somebody who really lived and breathed and walked around. So I would tell them that, yes, I knew him. I mean, "Hi, Colonel", "Hi, Duanne".

How did he dress in his everyday life? Everyday in that white suit. He had a carved cane that he carried. White suit, white shirt, white tie and his goatee and he always looked like that...ALWAYS, always, always...never changed.

Are there any characteristics about him that in your mind stand out that people wouldn't think of? The one that, of course, as a child I just was in awe and thought he was the best thing that anyone would ever want to know. Then when I got into the newspaper business, I had to interview him on a couple of occasions and HE liked to be in charge. He didn't like me asking the questions. Lots of times he would twist and start asking ME questions instead of letting me be in charge of the interview. So he was real "take charge" kind of fella. When he opened the restaurant out here, anybody who has ever been a waitress out there would tell you that he was hell to work for. He wanted things done right, he wanted things done his way and he smacked that cane around and dumped tomato soup out if it didn't taste right. So, he got where he was because of determination and having it done his way. He should have used the McDonald's logo, probably! Or is it, no, that's Burger King, or something. And the one thing, too, that a lot of people may not know, hopefully you'll get to interview Ed Casey, but Brother Ed was the minister at First Christian Church for 27 years and his first wife, Martha, passed away of cancer and everyone in town was very involved with her cancer and her death because Brother Ed had a prayer line that you could call. We loved Brother Ed even though I didn't go to church there, I just loved him. He used an old fashioned delivery where the words just rolled off his tongue and we would call that every night and it would say, "...and dear God bless Martha". And, oh, we would just feel so bad for him! Well, nobody felt worse about Martha passing away than Colonel Sanders. He went to church there. So, he was always teasing Brother Ed that he was going to find him another life partner. Well, low and behold, Brother Ed tells me that one Sunday in church, Colonel Sanders and Claudia come into church with this very attractive woman and sat right on the front row. The whole time he's pointing at her trying to get Brother Ed's attention. So after church is over, he makes Brother Ed go to lunch with them and he did fall in love and that turned out to be his wife now, Eleanor. She was a big business woman from Texas and the Colonel had met her on one of his trips. So, he

played Cupid. Brother Ed told me that story when I did the eulogy for our paper when Colonel Sanders died. So, yeh, he not only liked to tell people that he made chicken but that he also made matches in heaven!

We talked a little bit about how Blacks were, what did you call it, privileged to sit in the balcony and how women weren't allowed in the pool hall, was there animosity about any of that separation? When I started first grade, like I said, the Blacks were in my class and they sat you in alphabetical order and that's how I became friends with Mitchell because he was Payne and I was Puckett. We both made good grades and we were always competing against each other. He lived two blocks away from me in my neighborhood so we always saw each other a lot. We had kept in touch over all these years, so , I mean, it was really hard for me to understand, you know, it never dawned on me I didn't see Mitchell in restaurants or see him sit beside me until many years later when we had heart to heart talks about it. And it's through him that I've used as an example a lot, when people who CAN achieve despite whatever obstacles they're faced because he started the first African-American fraternity at Western, got his law degree at U of L, was the minority director at U of L, became the first black finance commissioner for the state of Kentucky under Martha Layne Collins and now he's back at U of L as a vice president of administration of some kind. So , I mean that he has really shown that you can come from a small town and be called bad names and not necessarily ever be president of your class and achieve and I think that speaks a lot. And we laughed about it too, oh gosh, I don't remember how many years ago, ten maybe. We went to the Bristol in downtown when it opened for Kentucky Center for dinner. There was another girl who was white and me and Mitchell and we went and the lady said, "How many?" and we said, "Three," and she went "...and fourth person coming," and we said "No, it's just the three of us". Well, she repeated it and we got to the table and she said, " Well, now, if there's a fourth person I can tell them where you are sitting," and we went, "NO!" and when she walked off I said, "Why did she keep asking that?" and Mitchell said, "I guess she thought that a black girl would be joining us," and I was surprised and it really never dawned on me to figure why she kept asking that. Well, we tease each other about things, too. When I went to his wedding, I don't know how many years ago now, I went with black friends of mine because when I called his mother, she said not too many white people were invited but I told her it didn't matter and I could go with black people. So, we went and Perry Morton carried my wheelchair up the stairs to the church and he carried me in so I sat with them and he carried me back down to the reception. So, after it was over, a black man came over and asked, "Are you all family or friends?" and I said, "Well, we're friends," and so Mitchell came up asked what the matter was and I said that guy asked if I was family and he said, "Oh, it was because I told him you were!" So, we are that close and I would never bat an eye about it. But, as far as women, I guess I just never thought that much about that because one of my good friends was one of the first women to ever be elected to city council. I'm the second female editor for the Sentinel News--the first one was because she owned the news and we bought her out, so I've never ever seen any prejudices against me because I'm a woman. But now my sister being the plant manager of those two plants, people will come in and say, "Hi, honey, I'm here to see the plant manager"...it's because she is woman and also she's short...she's

just 4'10", they think of her that she's probably there as the secretary and don't see this little person running these two printing plants, being in charge of all these gruffy, burly press crew guys. She can stand her own, we get that from my Dad, I think.

Was there animosity in women about such things as the pool hall? No, we wouldn't have wanted to go anyway, I don't think. The pool halls back in those days aren't the cliché that they are now, like Bardstown Road, OLD Bardstown Road in Louisville has those real clikky kind that you're supposed to go and it's real yuppie to go and play billiards; well, we did not have billiard halls, they were pool halls.

Tobacco stains on the floor and beers on the tables? Yes, and where the community theater is now was where the pool hall that was popular back when I was in high school and they had a huge plate glass window. If you ever wanted to know where your boyfriend was or the guy that you were sweet on was, you could drive by real slow and scope out through the window whether or not they were in there. That was OUR pool hall.

What was it about your father's store? You said he sold clothes to farmers? Did he sell dress clothes as well, work clothes or what? Right. Because he worked at Lee-McClains, he decided he wanted to sell their suits. Lee-McClain is a factory and you can buy the clothes there at factory prices, or, like I said, they would sell them in businesses. So Dad got the rights to sell them and they were Strathmore suits, you know, made by Lee-McClain, and we sold them in the store. Dad's store was really unique. He was a collector of things and people were real willing to bring things in and so the walls were covered with all this antique farm equipment and a lot of which I inherited! In our basement on Kentucky Street they were there and then when we moved to a new home, he brought some into the den and then since he's passed away I've kind of moved some out and passed them on to descendants. Just because I needed... you know, there were a lot of memories there for me. Oh, we have ox shoes, I have an ankle ball and chain from the old Shelby County Jail, I have chicken glasses--they're red plastic that would fit on a chicken's nose...on the beak...and so when they leaned down like this, the glasses would lean forward and they could eat but they leaned their head up the glasses fell down over their eyes and keeps them from fighting each other. The poultry business was real big in Shelby County. He brought in wagons wheels and put them on big poles and put little hooks underneath the wheel and that's what he hung all the suits and trousers from. He went and found whiskey kegs and polished them up and stained them and drove hooks around them and that's what we had our belts and our ties. He pickled the wood for all the cabinets...and I had never seen anything pickled before, that's where you paint the wood and then you rub it off, you don't let the paint stay on thick. And we had regular dress shirts and tops and everything. But it was a really hang-out place. We had a huge round table in the back that Dad made from the top of a hogs head, which is what they used to carry the tobacco in, and he made a table from that and he put all the magazines on it and lots of comfortable chairs and men of all ages, whether they were farmers or business men or retired fellas, would come and sit and talk all the time. So that's why so many people know me, because I was "Jesse's little girl" and grew up in the store. But,

like I say, we still have a lot of the things. We had an antique phone that he rigged up that he could answer the phone on but not dial out. I have that in my home now and he wired it up to be our doorbells so when you ring the doorbell that phone rings. But like I say, those other things, I did keep a lot and then some I passed around to all the nieces and nephews so everybody would have something from that wall because it was full of things...full of things.

What kind of changes went on in the way you did business over several years? Well, as more and more teenagers started taking more pride, I guess...you know, momma just didn't go shopping...then he started taking Marsha and I with him on his business trips, you know, buying trips where before we never did that. We would go shopping with Mom and then he would do all the ordering. Now I can remember after we got in high school and he would take us and we would go to the Brown Hotel and there would be three rooms all set up and all these salesmen there with all their things and Marsha and I got to pick out what sweaters the guys would like and what slacks and "Don't buy that tie, nobody will want that". So we were able to help him change his clothing to meet the changes of the time and not just cater to the older needs. Briggs-Hower kind of catered more to the older generation and then Andriot's was the other clothing store and when we went out of business they continued to really pick. He also had two sons who stayed in and one stayed in business. Now it's called Cromwell's.

Do you remember if there was trouble parking downtown at your father's business? I guess not. A lot of people parked behind the stores. We had a rear entrance to the store and people parked there and then would come up those back steps. There wouldn't have been a doubt in our minds not to leave that back door open. I guess in today's society you'd be afraid to leave your back door open and the back of the stores aren't kept up--you know, painted and clean and free of debris like they were then. I know that after my mother passed away and daddy and I would go to the cemetery, we would always come home on Clay Street and everytime we got to where the store was, Dad would always look up and say, "Isn't that ashamed". It was! It was full of weeds and the parking lot was no longer blacktop and so I think that the appearances of Clay Street has caused part of the parking problem but otherwise, no, because people parked up and down the street. During Christmas time, we were open every night till nine and sometimes eleven on Saturday night. They were finding somewhere to park! I think all of that goes back to the mentality of the mall. You can pull up near the entrance and park and you don't think of it being the distance you are walking to Lazarus. But when you're downtown, you think, "Well, gosh, I don't want to park here and have to walk up to the antique mall." I just think it's a mentality thing.

When did the antique malls start opening up in the downtown area? I'd say 10-12 years ago. Jackie Kennedy was the first with the Shelbyville Antique Mall. She went in to the building that was occupied by Kuhn's and in fact, she twisted the handle on the door so it's upside down, otherwise it still says Kuhn's. She was the first and everybody thought, "What an idiot! Who is this person?" She had been in the restaurant business at a nice little restaurant downtown and I can't think of the name of it. She decided to do

this and rent out the booths. Well, needless to say, that started a wildfire and from that point on...then when Lerman's and Lincoln's closed those two buildings were open and Gayle Stivers, who owned lots of property in town, bought them and thank goodness that his daughter took them over and she moved in an antique mall with her now husband and it just started from there. It's a natural for downtown. Historic buildings look good so why not go in and see a part of your past life in a historic building. I wish that the upper floors were more pleasant and could be used more especially from the outside. At night, if they leave a light on you can look up in there and see and it looks real attractive. But otherwise, I think it's a natural to have them downtown. It's been about 10 years and we give Jackie Kennedy credit for that. No relation to THE Jackie Kennedy!

Do you think most of the business is from tourists? Yes, except for me and my sisters! We love Jackie's! It's just like a spree for us once a month or so to go and see what we can find at Jackie's! We just love it but I do think that the majority of people are from out of town and the biggest time that they get local traffic is when they do a "Deal With the Dealer" Night. Like with anything, if other people are traveling into Shelbyville to shop at the antique malls, well, maybe people who are interested in antiques are making day trips somewhere else to do their shopping. Maybe that's just a natural switch.

What do think have been the biggest changes in the downtown area? Do you think it has been the changes in the types of business or is there another change? Yeah, I think in the type business and especially that mix. We used to have two drugstores so you could go in and get a pack of gum and a pack of cigarettes, buy a magazine, or pick up a bottle of lotion or whatever...you can't do that now. You could go buy a baby gift or do some little odds and ends shopping and you can't do that now. So, I think that yes we are fortunate to have a restaurant downtown but if we could have that little catch-all type place, but then yet, that's not going to be a livelihood for someone everyday. That would be nice if they could have that one little counter somewhere that could still cater to that little pick-up-candy bar place.

So it kind of seems like along with that, downtown has declined as a social center. Do you think that's right? Yes, for the most part. When I was thinking of that, it made me think of another store that I should have mentioned that's no longer there and it broke my heart...WP Dice Bookstore was where H&R Block and then there was Crane's Barber shop and he was a second generation barber and he was always there and always feeding the birds. Then the third shop was WP Dice Bookstore and I have old ledgers from that store at home that are stamped in the front WP Dice and got a ball that I bought there. But he was a mix of things and it was a little shotgun store with hardwood floors and he sold Blue Mondays---and if you've never had a Blue Monday candy bar you better go get you one! He sold Madame Alexander dolls and we have a picture of me standing looking in this huge case at these dolls that I would've just given my eye teeth for. But it was stationary and school supplies and receipts for businesses and pencils--everything and anything that you'd want--wallpaper in the back. It was just wonderful! In the foyer where you walked in, he had blue and white tile that said "WP Dice". When that person decided to buy that, they chipped out that tile and that just killed me cause even though

he was no longer WP Dice, I mean, how priceless! And that's why I'm thrilled that the "R" is still at Bistro and "Middleton" is still in front of those antique malls. That is just very, very important.

Tell me a little bit about your father's political career. Well, it's real funny. He decided to run for councilman and he did and he won and he served the two terms. Then he decided to run for Mayor in '59 and I would have been nine, I guess, and I can remember going with him door to door and handing out the flyers and everything. But then the second term would have been when I was like sixteen and that was the most heated race. He was running against the father of a friend of Marsha's and mine and who was a little more upper class than we were considered. We grew up on Kentucky Street which would have not been, what my mother called it, silk stocking lane...more like Bobby Socks Road, as she called it. So the campaign was real hot and heavy and they said we were from the wrong side of the tracks and all this type of thing. They had a lot of money back then so it was a hard race and Dad won by one vote and so he was called Landslide Puckett and for years, people would call him that. The man he was running against did contest the race and Dad ended up winning by twelve votes. But it was hilarious, I mean, Landslide Puckett! That was his claim to fame!

FLIP TAPE

...then he finished out his third term and then going into his...hoping to be his fourth term...he was defeated by Dr. Wyman Porter who was an optometrist in town. They were friends. So when he was defeated, Dr. Porter offered Daddy the position of City Clerk because the City Clerk was retiring. It was just a natural. Daddy was deciding to get out of the store anyway and that was just a real natural move for him. We are indebted to Dr. Porter for doing that but also the city should be indebted to Dr. Porter because he never took his salary the whole time he was Mayor. He let the city keep it. They had bought a building on College Street to use as the Public Works Department but they sold it and built a new Public Works. But they had called it "Porter Building" and I would hope that somewhere they would call something by his name because, you know, I mean it was probably two hundred dollars a month back in those days but still, he never took his salary and I thought that was nice.

You say your mother helped your father as City Clerk? Right and they were as different as night and day when it came to personalities. My father was rambunctious, loud, hollered, was the biggest teaser in town, played jokes on people; but by golly, if it was a rule or the law, you did it! Well, my mother was the most meek and mild person who would not holler, "Scat!" at anybody, and so Shelbyville during the time that Daddy was City Clerk instituted something called the "City Sticker". There was a \$15 fee that you had to buy this city sticker. If you worked in the city of Shelbyville or lived in the city of Shelbyville...and this income was to help pay for your using city streets. Well, more people hated that than anything. They cussed Daddy out, would bring in their fifteen dollars in pennies, everything under the sun! And I don't care what kind of stories they came up with ("Well, I walk to work", "I share a ride") he hollered and screamed to

make sure that, "EVERYBODY in town bought their city stickers!!" Mother would come home every night and tell me that somebody would come in and start hollering and screaming and she would start crying and Daddy would start hollering at them because they made his wife cry. It was a zoo! We were so thankful when the city voted out that city sticker so Daddy didn't have to worry about it anymore. But, yes, she loved working up there and Daddy hired two of their friends during city sticker time. Because there was one time during the year that you had to pay, I forget what it was, like the whole month of July or something like that and they always hired extra people during that time. So the other two women were always on Mother's side regardless how Daddy was behaving. But she was, like I say, a fancy little person...always wore high heels! I wrote a column about her in '89. Mother got Alzheimer's and for the last eight years of her life she was not my mother but this other person who I grew to love. I wrote one of my favorite columns of my whole time here at the paper because I worded so that you did not know it was my mother. "A&P is gone, Lawson's is gone, and so is her memory". But she loved both A&P and Lawson's and would've just died if she had known they had closed their doors! She wore high heels, always had her hair fixed, always had new gowns in case she had to go to the hospital, new towels in case company came that you couldn't use...she was as prissy as my Father was mowing the lawn in shorts and no shirt until one month before we found out he had cancer. They were complete opposites and how they survived 54 years together, I have never figured it out!

-End of interview. Additional comments by Duanne.-

Well, I guess the one thing that is obvious, too, is that I am in a wheelchair and a lot of people have always been stumped as to how I can run a newspaper from a wheelchair. It's because a lot of other people act as my legs lots of times. And one of those legs was my Dad's. Before we moved into the house where we live now, he literally carried me up until fifteen years ago. He carried the wheelchair and carried me...he was in perfect shape...he even would've done it up to five years ago. He was just remarkable! He instilled in me his determination. That regardless of how down you get in life, you just keep right on going...but, you rely on a sense of humor. So, through my accident we have laughed at everything under the sun and rarely cry! We refer to me as "Charlie Cripple" and everybody in town knows it and I write about myself in the paper as Charlie Cripple. We have laughed tons of times about my mother's Alzheimer's; otherwise, we would not have gotten through that and it's made other people laugh about it. We even found things to laugh about when Dad found out he had lung cancer. So, I think that to run this newspaper I have had to have my mother's sensitivity...because you have to be sensitive when you're dealing with people when they're upset; and I have Dad's backbone because I can put up with the best of 'em and I can stand my ground even though I can't stand. But it just rolls right off of me and I think I get that from both of them. I can run this newspaper and not think a thing about it and go right on to something else. You and I might have a knock-down drag-out over your story today and tomorrow we'll be best friends and I'd be taking you out to lunch!