

## **Richard D. Collins**

*Executive Director of Maine from 1966 to 1974*

*Interviewer:* Susan Neumann

*Date, location of interview:* 1/21/05, Columbus, OH via telephone to Whidbey, WA

*Richard D. Collins current contact information:*

2266 Lori Drive  
Langley, WA 98260  
[rdc@whidbey.com](mailto:rdc@whidbey.com)  
360-321-5064

*1. Think back on those early days of SAA's, when you were new in your job and the whole "field" was in formation.*

*A. What was the "big idea" behind the formation of the NEA and SAA's?*

When I joined into this whole operation, it was really an experimental attempt to bring governmental support to the arts across the county and getting into the NEA, they realized quite early that, if they were really going to reach out across the country, they would need to have state programs. I was one of the first particularly in a small state hired to be an executive and the whole concept was to reach out in every community and every art form across the nation. The scope was huge and probably not very well thought out. It was mostly just a matter of how do we get government money into the arts. The scope got very big very quickly, so big that it would have taken billions to have tried to accomplish it.

*B. What was your "big idea" when you took your job – what was the situation in your state, and where were you hoping to go?*

In Maine, you're at the end of the line in the northeast. You've got a thumb sticking up into Canada and a lot of the state in those days was pretty open; had few really major centers, population centers, and certainly not much in the way of arts institutions. As I've moved across the country over the last half century, every place I've been has said, "Well, we have more artists per population than any place else in the world," and Maine was very much one of those places, too. We just were loaded with artists but in reality they're known not very far out of their own community so we didn't have much in the way of resources. The concept was how do we bring arts more into daily lives of people throughout the state and I had very definitely the feeling that every community could appreciate the arts. There was no community too large or too small and so the issue was, was anybody interested and how do we go about reaching out to those communities. So that was the goal and the first step was a study. I did a study and tried to reach every section of the state. The state is actually small and, although Maine is the largest one in the New England area, it still is a small state and I was able to get out to all the major communities and I spoke to lots and lots of groups about what they would like to see and so forth. There was no real commonality in the state; everybody had sort of a different idea; except that mostly people would like to see more happening and they would like to see more opportunities. That was my first goal of mine and I had no idea how long I'd be

there, whether I would be there the rest of my career or whether I would be there for two years and, having done a study, have to move on. But it was a place I loved and had wonderful people to work with so it was just sort of an experiment.

*C. When you left your job, do you think you had made progress in achieving your “big idea”? Or did you change your mind about what was needed?*

There were a couple of things. One, yes, I think we did. We had a lot of interest throughout the state; we had a lot of things going on; we had communities that were participating in the arts in ways they had never expected before from things like the Tony Montenaro Mime Trouping in residence in a community for a week and a major dance companies being in residence in schools. Then we were tied into the Title III Elementary and High Education Act which opened up several arts institutions that didn't last but they were very exciting and opened the eyes to some new opportunities for communities. I felt that we really did develop a sense of the arts as being part of the community and of the government structure. We worked hard on making the Maine legislature be involved and one of the things that made us successful even though we were a small state was that we had more state money on a population basis than I think any other state in the United States on a population basis. So we had state money to work with to match the federal money and to get extra federal money that many of the larger states never took advantage of. So that gave us a chance to try some touring programs; as I say the residency programs; we were aggressively out there trying to find what other people were doing. We were not restricted by travel restrictions by the state which many states were. They were not allowed to outside the borders of their own states. We were very able to do anything like that so I served on a lot of national panels and I got to know a great deal about what was going on. It was a tremendous learning experience for all of us but particularly for me.

*Did you change your mind about what was needed? One of the things that I didn't so much change my mind but was clarified and that was no matter how much money we had, we could never support the individual artists because what was an individual artists? The numbers I just mentioned earlier...there's no quantification of what is an artist; therefore, anybody who says they're an artist says, “I would like my share of the money.” It is just overwhelming. I've seen that coast to coast. I've usually been in the minority. I feel that, if government money is focused more on trying to develop audiences and develop buyers and develop activities, then the artists will benefit. So our main individual grants were given for participation in special projects and for a Maine state award each year which focused on individual artists and individual patrons who made things happen. That was very successful. It got lots of good coverage on it; people became more aware of these people who were in existence and that was I think where I really changed definitely. I felt that you had to focus if you were going to be successful.*

*D. What were you proudest of having achieved during your time in office?*

Survival. There were so...most of the things as far as I was concerned were small things and then all the small things added up to a lot of activity and a lot of people interested and a lot of people influenced. Things like a kid right up against the Canadian border who had heard a string quartet and he said, “Oh, my gosh, I've never heard anything so

beautiful. How do I get to play the violin? I've never even heard a violin like that." Those little things that happen. Going up the stairs for Alvin Ailey performances in Portland and you had people in black tie and you had people in Granny skirts and combat boots and you had business suits, it was the total mix of the community coming to see what turned out to be just devastatingly beautiful dance. It was hugely exciting. The excitement of the arts reaching out to new audiences has always appealed to me.

*E. What was most frustrating to you?*

Most frustrating was when we started having enough money to be significant and my own board started moving from what's good for the arts in Maine to how much can we get for the crafts, how much can we get for dance, how much can we get for the orchestra; everybody started wanting to get what they felt they could get that they deserved. From the very beginning we organized the board to be not representation of art form or arts organization but to look at what's good for the arts in the state. That was frustrating. Then the other was the small groups who would say, "Hey, we want a grant. We need to buy some stuff for our club." And we'd say, "But that's not what we're here for." And they'd say, "Well, then we don't want to deal with you. We just want our piece of the pie." Those were the frustrations. That and, of course, legislatures change so on and you have good ones and you have bad ones and you're constantly fighting for your life, but that's politics. And that's where a lot of people who take these jobs don't understand. If you don't live the political life, you're going to get eaten alive. But the frustrating was not nearly as important as all the really wonderful things that happened.

*F. What was most surprising to you?*

No, not particularly. Maybe the fact that it was so easy to make change in those days. You practically always found somebody who was willing to step up and be heard and help out. We didn't have a lot of trouble. We had mostly people who wanted to see this happen; even the legislature had people who wanted this to happen. I was hired by a Republican governor and a Democratic legislature. Six months I had a Republican legislature and a Democratic governor and we didn't miss a beat because I was the governor's man and I was the legislature's man. I had to play both sides equally and fair and honest and it worked.

*G. What was your agency's relationship with the NEA like? With other SAA's? With ACA? With local arts agencies?*

NEA – Very close. We learned a lot from the people down there. Clark Mitze who was in the state desk at the NEA was great and Nancy Hanks was wonderful to talk to. You could go down and sit and chat. Everybody was very open. Clark mentioned something to my wife when we saw him just this past year and said, "You may not remember that Dick was one of the first state directors to serve on an NEA panel and that was because we had to put state people on and the theatre people thought that Dick would be a nice quiet soul to serve his time but once he got aboard, he kept asking questions and kept participating until the director of theatre panel said, 'You know, he's one of our most valuable members.'" So it was that kind of relationship that came about and I don't think I was the only one. We had many really good state people who started serving on the

NEA panels and I think everybody had that same feeling that they were there to try to make things better and tie the state and federal programs more closely together.

SAA's – Well, as I mentioned before, I did get a chance to get out a lot. For instance, if I would go down to New York, I would call John Hightower and say, "Hey, could we get together?" and he'd bring three or four of his program people and we'd meet over at the Russian Tea Room which was just around the corner from his office and we'd sit there for two and a half hours talking. They'd want to know what I was doing and what I was learning. They would help me on things I was interested in knowing more about. It was a very, very open relationship. As far as close relationships, most of ours were in the northern New England area where Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont are so similar. And we're all fighting somewhat the same kind of issues so we have a collegiate relationship but we didn't get together very much in those early days. It was later when we started getting into the combination of states and into the regional agencies that we started working together more closely.

ACA – We were involved and they did conferences and so on but it wasn't really that important as far as I was concerned. Mostly the relationship with the NEA and with the other state agencies and we had almost no local arts agencies to speak of anyway so we were sort of it in the early days.

LAA – We tried to help form them but still they were pretty weak

*H. (this can be a probe question from g above) What was the single biggest issue or challenge the SAA field had vis a vis the federal government, the regionals, other states, the local arts agencies?*

We had no issues or challenges with the regionals 'cause they didn't exist. We had no issues with other states; we were all trying to learn from each other and, as I said, we had no real local arts agencies. So what's our biggest issue and problem with the federal government and that was an easy one? Trying to keep them from developing huge bureaucracies and reports and set up their own rules and regulations that weren't consistent with the states and that I thought over the whole time I was there. At one time they had sent out a statement from the NEA that they were going to be requiring a new annual report. It was a 15-page report of questions and I looked at that sucker and I said, "Whew, I'm going to have to hire somebody just to keep all this stuff and report and I complained to Clark and Clark called in the three of us who complained across the country. That happened to have been...I can't remember who it was...but it happened to have been myself, Ohio, and Oklahoma. We were the only three state directors that said, "What are you trying to do to us?" *Was it Jim Edgy?* Yes, it was Jim. I was trying to think of Jim's last name and I'm drawing a blank on Oklahoma, too; it was a good friends. The three of us went in, we met and at the end of a long day of working with some NEA people and Clark, we trimmed the thing down to like two pages because most of it was, "Well, if Congress should ask..." And we said, "Well, has congress ever asked that question?" Well, no, but if they ever do..." "So you want us to keep all these recorded so in case..." "Alright, we'll strike that one." We went through the whole package. The other was financial. I ended up having to have financial records for the state of Maine, you'd expect that. The records they wanted were not exactly what the

NEA wanted and they weren't what the corporate area wanted when we were going for co-ventures or grants or so forth so I ended up with three sets of books and my board was always saying, "How can you do that? We have to have one set" And I said, "Because they don't work. Just tell me who's asking the questions. All the figures are the same if you have the time to go and calculate one relates to the other but they all have to be kept in different categories and so on." That was a big problem. I had the state controller working for me on that basically so I had lots of help but it seemed to me to be extremely difficult and most of the time one didn't know any more than the other. One set of books would have been just fine and, of course, the state books were the only ones that counted anyway. Now can you say that is a huge problem but it was one that bothered me. By that I mean, in the scheme of things, it wasn't much but it took time; you didn't have people. I remember when I went to the board and I said, "You know, we've got to have a person in here who can handle the front office, answer the telephone. I'm in the field a lot. We have to have somebody here and somebody who's intelligent." And they said, "Oh, really." And so we got approval of one more FTE and the board was so excited they wanted to set up a national search. I said, "This is a front office person. I'll hire the person and we'll get on with it." So a little thing like that blew people away, "Wow, this is fantastic." We ended up with a relatively sizeable staff for a small state because we were also a humanities commission and we spun that off...I don't even remember. I actually got sued for not putting one of our people in the position. She was determined she was going to have it so she sued me for sex discrimination even though five of the six final applicants were all women and the final one who won was a woman. Then I was sued by the guy for sex discrimination against a male so I learned a lot but it all came out with no problem. But those no things were all new. They were just really unsure how it all worked; we didn't know; we had to make our own rules as we went. The one thing I learned was that you had to be aware that anything could happen at anytime so you did have to be careful. At the same time, if you weren't aggressively moving toward some sort of goals, there was no reason for you to be in existence.

*I. Can you think of an anecdote that tells us something about the arts in the political climate of your state at that time? Can you tell us who – if anyone – was a special political ally to you in those days (the governor? A legislator?)*

What I said before was true. In both cases Governor Reed was very supportive and got the whole project off and running and six months later he was out and Governor Curtis came in who was there, I guess, for rest of my time, he left about the same time I did. He and Polly his wife were very good friends and very good supporters and they were always asking me to help them out at the mansion to do some special events, put them in contact with people and so on, so they were very interested. At the same time I had some real good people in legislature who would call up and say, "Dick, you got to get over here. Your program money is about to get cut and I think you'd better get in here and talk to some people." And shortly thereafter I'd be over there and they'd point out who'd I have to talk to and I'd to talk to them so you did the whole political thing and I couldn't have been successful if people hadn't felt comfortable with calling me and if they hadn't been supportive of what I was trying to do. That to me was always the primary political issue. We did do one exhibit that I had brought in from the New England states from Scotland and I got a call saying that the legislator from East Point was up in arms over

the pornography in the show. And I'm sitting there saying, "Pornography? Good grief, what?" It was a photograph I had taken of the artist down on her knees doing a drawing on the floor and behind her was a drawing completed on the wall of a rather gross pregnant woman and that was it. I sat down with the legislator and he said, "Dick, look, this is not a big problem to me but there are some of my people who are really up in arms." But in end we decided just to let it ride and it never became an issue again. Lots and lots of activities with the legislators and I've learned that you've got to do both sides of the aisle. I was at a conference just recently where it was obvious that almost everybody there were highly Democratic in their attitude. And I thought; "Wow, here they are trying to get big money out of the government and yet they're only working with one side of the fence." Now that may be good from the standpoint that, if you have a position, you tell people what that position is but, if you're trying to get a larger budget, it's hard as heck if you don't have both sides of the aisle working for you.

*J. How did you use your time?*

*1. Can you describe a prototypical day?*

Yeh, up early; a 35-minute drive to work; getting there before nine; leave at 7:00; 35-minute drive home; and then trying to do some planning for an hour or two after dinner; and that's a typical day in the office. *What did you do in the office?* There was no typical day. You had grants administration, yes. You may have planned grants review and you spend almost all day over in the legislature. Later when we were brought into the department of education and cultural services, I was quite often at education seminars or conferences with the top members of the department of education. I was the only one representing culture. I was out in the field a lot. I had to be out there talking to people. I had to go see what they were doing. I had to meet with clubs. I traveled 35000 miles in my car the first year and out here in the West, that doesn't seem like much, but in Maine it was a lot of travel. I got to know communities in every corner of the state and so the concept of being a typical day just wasn't there. You were a one person office basically back in the early days and whatever had to be done, you to do it. I did have to write budgets. I didn't really have to fundraise except I got funding from the NEA and other such education programs and things like that. Yes, there was some of that. You're planning for your next board meeting, you're planning for your next subcommittee meeting; you are trying to develop partnerships with other agencies all the time. I didn't work as long those days; I only worked about 65-hour week. It was only later I got into consulting and went to an 80-hour week. I'm an over-achiever and hyper. And I had a wife who understood and we're still married after 49 years. It's been a great ride.

*2. In a typical year at the beginning, can you give a general idea of how your time divided (in percents, roughly):*

I can't really answer them honestly because they changed and, as I got a little larger, some of the grants administration was handled by an assistant and I did more of the advocacy particularly trying to maintain our position within state government because there was a lot of feeling that we needed to be consolidated into something else and we were finally. I spent a lot of time with the government trying to set up department of cultural affairs and I almost made it when, again, Ohio stepped in. There was a meeting in Ohio that the museum people went to and the director of the state museum went there

and he came back and he said, “Oh, I learned that as a state museum we should be in the secretary of state’s office.” “Why? I mean, there’s nothing there. I mean it’s a very weak office.” That basically was it; they would leave the museum alone whereas if they went into cultural affairs, they were afraid they might be absorbed into some other structure. So, did that take a lot of time? It took a lot of time. Grants administration wasn’t just me so it’s pretty hard... You can take fundraising down...unless you’re talking about raising grants but that’s more partnership building with government agencies. *Fundraising is more private fundraising.* I did none. We helped other people try to do that as part of our program but we lived within what we got from our governmental sources. That only changed later on when the government started backing out of a lot of stuff and people felt they had to keep their program together by going out and fundraising.

- \_\_\_ *Grant administration*
- \_\_\_ *advocacy/lobbying with public officials*
- \_\_\_ *field /constituency communication*
- \_\_\_ *agency strategic planning*
- \_\_\_ *program development*
- \_\_\_ *fundraising*
- \_\_\_ *partnership building (with other government agencies, with other types of nonprofits, with private sector, with arts/cultural agencies at other levels of government)*

3. *Did your time use change in any noticeable way from the beginning to the end of your time at the SAA?*

Very different. And that mostly as I say came about because I had more people; we had more programs; I had different kinds of programs. We did do development working with Dead River Corporation which was a lumber and lobsters and paper company up in Bangor, Maine, up in the northern part of the state. We got a truck from them and we turned it into a gallery and put together a show and toured it into a lot of small communities. And we basically ran that. That’s when I started going to the 65 and 70 hour weeks because some of those times I was out there well after dark working away in a truck parking lot...it was cold...and my wife there with me trying to help hang pictures and so on. We did so much with so little. Later on we couldn’t do that because I was going to openings at the Portland Museum and traveled a heck of a lot of the time but it kept changing all the way and became more and more development of political or awareness or community improvements. I spent less time on grants administration, less on evaluations. Agency strategic planning was always very high on what we had to do.

*K. What else - information, stories – can you tell us that you think people in the future ought to know about your agency, or the SAA world in general?*

It was a grand concept. It was not intended to have any limits, it could go on forever and get bigger and bigger and that, of course, has not happened. I think that the state arts organizations were extremely important and it was lucky that they were put into existence; it’s given a lot more strength to the National Endowment. The National Endowment kind of lost direction in that they had to help every community with

something. And I was a great believer that you couldn't do it all in New York. An awful lot of money went into projects that I sat on the evaluation committee and said, "Why are we giving money to this organization? They hardly know how to keep their head above water and you're sending money to do this big issue." Well, but they are very worthy" And I'm saying, "I don't understand that." Then there was a real push to aid the individual artists and that one, as I said at the beginning, is so broad, so huge, I couldn't see how they could do much. I was much more in favor like they do in Japan where government money goes primarily to an edifice or goes to major programs but not to individuals; that comes from the private sector. I thought that was kind of an interesting concept and here we just didn't seem to be able to have that kind of focus. Now maybe that's not a good idea; I'm only saying my own opinion. I felt that Nancy Hanks was a wonderful head of the arts agency. I thought that people like Clark and many of the program managers at the NEA really had their heads on right for the most part and always under constant pressure to do more and do things that they really shouldn't do. That was always a tremendous amount of pressure on them. As I mentioned there are so many things in my own personal career that are small items that don't add up to a lot but they meant a lot at the time and opened up some new doors. Good people to work with particularly in early days; they had that same feeling that they wanted to do something for the state, not for themselves, not for their community or their institutions but for the state as a whole. There are a multitude of those kinds of stories; mostly a lot my memories are vignettes of things like sitting around Vinal Haven Island talking about a small chamber orchestra tour and sitting around in the yard and talking and having really good discussions and making plans and as we got closer to lunch time, they brought out a big kitchen pot of freshly picked mussels and we sat there eating clams and mussels and finishing lunch. Then down on the shore with the education people and when we finished about a four-hour session of planning, went down to the pen and they pulled up lobsters and took them up and prepared them for the moment. It was very nice. Then we had a group of state arts agencies that came to our house...I don't remember what the occasion was...but there was about eight of them that came in and we had the conference and we went to our house which was on the shore and we had lobsters...it was winter time...but we had lobsters and just a glorious evening. After it was over we got into a couple of cars to head back down to Portland; it had been snowing a lot so you had a Maine winter scene. And I went up around the Congregational Church on the town green and then crossed by the Lutheran Church and there in the window of the church was a string quartet rehearsing in the parsonage window and everybody says, "Collins, this is the most beautiful staging job we've ever seen." And I said, "No, this is just the way we live." So we drove everyone back to Portland and they left.

*II. Have you stayed in touch with the state arts agency field since you left your position as Executive Director?*

No. It's interesting; out here you hardly know they exist. You hardly know the NEA exists. If you get out to conferences, as I have this past year, I've begun to see a few more; but, no. There's nothing really that indicates much going on. We don't hear much about even the Washington State Arts Commission unless they need more money or they do something that they shouldn't have done, that somebody thinks they shouldn't have

done. I do keep in touch with WESTAF because I'm on their mailing list and I keep in touch with what's going on there a little bit.

*And you haven't kept in touch with any of the directors you knew back then?*

No, only if there's someone once in a while. As I mentioned before I do keep some tabs with Clark Mitze and his son Tom is somebody who works with me in projects now and then and so I talk to Tom a lot and keep tabs on what Clark is doing. I talk to Denny every four or five years. I've had particularly more contacts with the Washington State Arts Commission for the last couple of years and was involved with them with a visitation from people in Shanghai recently. I was representing the performing arts. So that's about all I do. Most of the people I came up with are not there and, if you wanted to go back to one point of interest, that first couple of years...remember, I was one of the first hired...that couple of years, people after one, two years were gone. And the reason I've always felt that they were gone was they didn't understand that they had dropped into a political arena; not an arts organization. And they thought it was going to be arts oriented, and it turned out that, if they couldn't become interested and involved in the political arena, they were going to be very unhappy because they wanted it to be really arts.

*A. If so,*

*1. From your experience how has the role and the activities of SAAs changed since you began your career?*

No, I really can't, except I'm probably still right; you still have to understand politics; otherwise, you're not going to go far. Even before I got out of that role and went into the regional role, I could see that a lot of the people were not coming from university jobs which many did in the first couple of years but they were coming from institutional jobs where they do understand the broader needs of politics and finances and reports and things like that; more management background.

*2. From your experience, what skills/competencies do you think are most important to incoming SAA staff? To SAA leadership?*

*Again you would say understanding politics?* Yep and don't think that you're going to come in to place your view of what the arts are on the state. They're not going to listen to you.

*3. Would you pursue a career in SAAs/public arts management today if you were starting out?*

No, probably not. Except it's really hard...I could easily because I know a lot. I'm very broad in my background which I think it takes. Would I want to go over all that fuss over this little deal and that little deal, no. I would have a hard time being patient. I was very patient in those early days. So it's a little hard for me to say what I would do but knowing what I know now, no, I wouldn't. Now it's a good field for a lot of people to get into, I shouldn't say that. I'm not saying it's not a good career. I think it's a superb career. If you can really understand what you're doing and like it, you can have a tremendous impact on what's going on in the whole community and, as head of Western States, I had a tremendous impact on what was happening to a whole half a country and did a lot to developing a regional program that was aggressive and outreaching. I go

back to aggressive because we were always out there looking for ways to make things happen. And I had a staff and budget to do that. Very exciting stuff so if you're just thinking about getting into the business then that might be really good.

*4. Has the field lived up to its promise? Why or why not?*

I don't think it had any promise. I think it had some ideas and I think that it's very survival over so many times of being on the downslide and it keeps coming back and I think it's coming back stronger again. I think it's done well. Whether it's lived up to its promise, I'm just not sure what the promise would have been.

*B. If you have NOT stayed in touch with the field, why not?*

Two things. It's not just sitting there waiting for me to stay in touch. Second one would be the people I knew personally are gone and into other fields and some have died because I've been around a long time. And then the other is I've been too darn busy. I'm going to booking conferences; I'm going to legal conferences; I'm going to accounting conferences and I don't really have time to go see what's going on in state arts agencies. Now next month that's a little different. I will be down speaking to legislature trying to get them to continue to support the Arts Commission and to support the arts in general across the state so I'll be back in politics but it's more for the performing arts center and performing arts organizations than it is for the state arts agencies. I mean I'm still working 65 hours a week and I'm retired sort of. I retired three times. I'm working full time again and just don't have much time for anything else.

*III. Think about the time when you were starting your work with SAAs. What have you changed your mind about, if anything, from then to now?*

What I mentioned before about the support of the individual artists. I really have hard time with feeling that we can do much that's significant and that it's better left at the state level and I don't think the states are in much of a role to do that either. I'd rather leave it with institutions. I haven't changed too much; I'm just more firm about that. I think that one does have to say also that you just can't keep coming out and saying, "If we don't get another 25% increase this year, we're failures." That's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

*IV. Do you have a single piece of advice for a young person entering the field of public sector arts administration today?*

Try to develop some sense of humility. So many of them come in thinking they're going to be a real tough leader and that everybody's got to listen to them. They have to learn from everybody else that's they're dealing with; otherwise they won't learn fast enough. I was always so lucky, as I said before, to have been able to travel and meet with other people. I guess I had my own thoughts, I had my own directions, but I was willing to hear anybody say things and I hardly ever came out of a discussion that I didn't feel I'd learned something. Too many people particularly who come out with degrees and public community administration, they seem to feel that they now have a plan and they can just put that in place and everybody should listen. Not so. You've got a lot of convincing of everybody that has to be done as you go along. The other thing is...the single piece of advice is to be very, very smart.

*V. Information about you:*

*A. Education*

1. *Educational level (has, ba, some grad, ma, PhD)* Actually I had a Ph.B, Doctor of Philosophy. And I was able to maintain that one because of the kind of program I had and the fact I was leaving to go to art school and they talked me into staying on because I was a scholarship student at Northwestern and I stayed on which was the best thing that ever happened to me.

2. *Major/field* Fine Arts was my major and Speech was my minor

*B. What skills/competencies did you have/did you bring to your leadership position at an SAA? How had you acquired these skills? (experience, professional development training, formal degree education)*

I had had experience with running my own business. I had experience with government. I had experience with major corporations, ? and IBM. I had worked with top management in all those. And from government I worked with admirals and generals right on down through privates and their families; in the arts and crafts business. I got to know a lot of people and how they operated. I got to know about what made people tick and what they're looking for. So I came out to Maine with a lot of corporate skills and management skills. And I wasn't afraid of anybody from a governor to a head of department. I'd represented IBM in the New York Board of Trade Arts Advisory Commission and later that also spun off the business volunteer for the arts and so forth so lots and lots of that kind of experience. I had a very strong arts background so I could speak to the visual and the performing arts and did not feel awkward. I deal with a lot of people right now who will say, "I want this so badly. I, of course, am not a specialist in the arts. I really know nothing about the arts" and immediately I know I'm working with a very weak link because they don't know that they're very much involved with the arts but, because they've never been trained in it, they feel awkward. I never felt that; I felt that was extremely important. When I was at Northwestern, I got really a broad education and a really professional level education and we'd won the Rose Bowl and was the top dog in the whole Big Ten so that gave me a confidence that I never would have had. (Laughs) We had a winning season; we won the Rose Bowl. (Laughs)

*C. Work Experience*

1. *Specific arts management experience vs. non-arts management experience*

2. *Did you work for a SAA either before or after your time as Executive Director?*

No, but at Western States, of course, I was working with nine state arts agencies.

3. *Did you work for a public sector agency – not an SAA – either before or after your time as Executive Director?*

WESTAF. I was there just two and one half years to get it up and running and get it going. Then I moved across the street and became head of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. My time worked out well. It was two and one half years at Western States; got Western States on its feet; got it organized; got it well known; I got it on the agendas of all the states. So it was really good for me and for Western States and I couldn't have done that without the state arts agency background.

4. *It may be necessary for us to just ask them to make a list of their work experience in chronological order – no need for years – including the SAA, and then for us to categorize – jotting one of these categories after they have named the job:*

- private sector management
- government agency management
- gallery/performance group
- fundraising/grant administration
- performer/critic/writer
- lobbyist/advocate
- nonprofit sector experience
- elected office holder
- arts education/teacher
- academic
- service organization experience: national or other

#### *Work Chronology*

*D. Do you pursue any art form? Which?*

Yes, fundraising. Believe me, that is an art form. We've raised...oh, I don't even remember what it is now...but over \$100 million for capital. That's what we raise money for is capital. And right now I'm rising as part of my job; I'm trying to \$100 million for a performing arts center. Now as far as my doing the sculpture that I'd like to do, I don't get back to it. I don't even do photography any more. I hope at some point I start doing this again. It's always there. I'm right here in my studio now and I could set up and start doing something in ten minutes but there's too many other things that are sitting in the front of my mind.

*E. Demographic information:*

1. *Gender* - Male
2. *Age range now* - 75
3. *geographic region he or she lives now* – Washington; Whidbey Island
4. *political/partisan identification* – Independent; I vote all over the lot which makes it easier for me to play both sides of the fence because I go more for the individual than for a party identification. I'm probably either a conservative liberal or a liberal conservative, I'm never quite sure.

I think you've covered a lot. I mean it was a big, long segment of my life. It was very important but mostly it's just a time that's done now and you've kind of brought it back up again. I still have files here. I'm a genealogist for the family and so I have two files of genealogy materials and then I have one whole one file of the projects that I've worked on including one file drawer of Maine and Western States; some memorabilia. So it's still very much here.

Did you know Terry Melton? Terry was my chairman when I came out to Western States from Maine. Then when I left there to go over to the Denver Center, Terry said, "My

god, Dick, why are you doing that? Why are you leaving one of the best jobs in the country to go into that snake pit?" I said, "Well you know, I've done my job here. I feel that somebody else can take on Western States and do a good job. I'm basically a developer. I like to go in and take something and try to make it work. I'm very proud of what we've done at Western States and the people that we've put together on our team here. It's really wonderful but now it's time to try something else." And I was there two and a half years; got the thing built and kept board from killing itself. They were so splintered and then I was done and obviously it was time to move on; ended up here out in Washington where we've been for 25 years. I've been a consultant much of that time so I continue to take projects and develop them and that's what I'm doing with the current Performing Arts Center on the east side, a huge project. I wouldn't have done it except it's something we tried it 17 years ago and it didn't work. It fell apart in politics and the challenge was so great, I'm still fighting them; a different side of politics and it's still tough. It's really a challenge and all the things I've done on this career, much of it in the arts agencies and such critical part of my training, is always there at the back of my mind.