

## **Nash Cox**

*Executive Director of Kentucky from July 1, 1974 to April 1, 1985*

*Interviewer:* Susan Neumann

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*I. 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?*

It seemed to be at that point just very basic; that is, it was cultural development and supporting arts organizations and individual artists with direct grants. I think for the NEA it started out in a very small capacity but part of its structure was to offer grants...and you probably know all of this anyway...to the individual states to initiate a state arts agency. We were among the first of the states to take up that request to start a state arts agency. We fortunately had an awfully good leader in the arts, a woman who was the wife of the University of Kentucky president. She was a formative influence in those early years and was able to hire an experienced person, Bill Hull from New York. He had worked with the New York State Arts Council and he came to Kentucky. The two of them, Rose Oswald and Bill Hull, were just a wonderful powerhouse in going out to the state and beginning to develop audiences for the arts and beginning to identify what existed. Now the big idea behind the formation of the NEA I think was just very basic: trying to pry lose more private money to support those arts organizations and also to give support for individual artists. It was the same kind of thing in Kentucky but Kentucky was a fairly poor rural state so there was a lot that we didn't know arts about in our state when the state arts agency was initiated. I guess it was established in '65 by executive order and then the next year the legislature established the Kentucky Arts Commission and that provided at least initial money for things to begin. I think at that point there weren't many programs to speak of. It was more just an opportunity to try to find out what existed in the state. When Jim Edgy came on and he had been Bill Hull's assistant so there had been continuity there, he continued identifying art organizations and artists in the state but we also had a very strong component of audience development from the very beginning because so many communities out in the state didn't have any exposure to the arts and no way of experiencing art. So we had from the very beginning performing arts touring in which individual communities would establish organizations to bring in performing arts groups from around the country. Our job was trying to offer technical assistance to those groups and a little bit of seed money as well to help them bring in a whole program, a season of performing arts so that audience development from the very beginning was extremely important. We also had a visual arts component of touring exhibitions that went around the state and often those would be in libraries or in public spaces so that people would have an opportunity to see original art. So the big

idea behind the state arts agency was very much like the NEA except we were starting I think at the place where we really didn't know what was out there at first.

*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?*

I had come on the staff of the arts council in September of '72 and I was director of performing and literary and media arts. That was my particular field and also arts in education. Previously my experience had been in education as a teacher so that that all seemed very comfortable to me. I had felt at that point that we needed to continue what had been established so far but we needed to continue to expand it. We just had a very small staff of four people at that point and it was very frustrating because there was so much to do. We felt that we needed to expand so much more on what had been done to build community support across the state and to strengthen these major organizations that we had in our state. But we also felt that the artists-in-the-schools program was a very strong program for our state because of the rural nature of the state and yet every county had school systems in which we could place an artist and then that artist would have some influence not only on the school but also on the community. Many times that would help a catalyst for other things happening. I didn't have any big idea I think when I took the job but it was simply to build on what was there and perhaps expand it more.

*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?*

I don't think there was any change. I think that instead what we saw in the eleven years or so that I was there was a great expansion, a tremendous expansion for a variety of reasons. I think definitely there was progress in achieving the idea of supporting major arts institutions in the state, of making the arts available to communities around the state, of having a stronger voice in arts education, and just raising awareness of the importance of the arts.

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

I never feel I achieved it but things happened during the time that I was there that made a big difference and I'll tell you about one of them because in looking back over it I see that probably this is one of the most important events that occurred when I was on the job. We had quite a remarkable chairman of the arts council after Rose Oswald left. It was a man from Louisville who was chairman of the commission and he was head of the Louisville gas and electric company; Louisville Gas I think it was called. He was a big community leader, very prominent as a board member of the orchestra and very committed to the arts. I think that pressure was placed upon him from the Louisville Orchestra and Actors Theatre of Louisville particularly the drama group to try to get more money from the government. We had governor at the time who was very supportive of the arts. Mr. Milner and our governor, Governor Carol, got together in several conversations and worked out a challenge grant plan. And it was the first challenge grant in the arts I think in the country. At NEA, I don't think they were even thinking about it at that particular point. I think credit should go to Hudson Milner and Governor Carol for coming up with this concept. Governor Carol gave us about \$250,000 from his contingency fund to offer to organizations around the state who were

accountable and who were professional enough to qualify and who had been raising money so that they would be given a 25% match for every dollar they raised. This was a wonderful idea of providing arts organizations with additional money based upon how much support they had from their own community. It seemed to be a win-win situation because, if an organization were really serving the community and providing arts programming that was high quality and seemed to be serving a need in the community, the people would be willing to support it. Our feeling was that this was a very healthy way of trying to encourage support for arts organizations and also I think inherently in the program they had to be providing services to their community in order for people to support them. At that point we had a governor who could only serve one term but Governor Carol's predecessor had resigned to go to the Senate so Governor Carol was there for five years or just over five years and that was a real boon to us because every year he supported the concept of the challenge grant and it grew and it grew. From the beginning there were not too many organizations who were involved but as time went on that number grew. We were demanding greater accountability from the arts organizations and they had to become much more professional in the way in which they were operating. So it was a program that had many positive implications. Also I wanted to make a point about politics at that time. I think this is important to understand. In our state at that time our legislature met every two years and they were very weak. They met for three months every two years. Our governor had all the power. He had a contingency fund; he could do anything he wanted with that. It was a political slush fund I suppose but at the same time we were able to be recipients of some of that money for special projects like the challenge grant. I knew him. He had been a friend of my father; my father had been one of his mentors so he was always very open and supportive of me which I appreciated. In Kentucky it was still the old boys' network. Things were done on a person-to-person basis and, if you had the ear of governor, that was all you needed so we didn't need to work the legislature; we didn't need to have a wide advocacy group at that time because the power all rested in one person's hands which was great up to a point until the situation changed. But being a rural state and being a poor state this turned out to be a real advantage at that point. The challenge grant turned out to be a plus for us in those early years. So I would say certainly the challenge grant and since you're going up to just 1975 I won't say anything more but the challenge grant was established in 1975. It was in the winter of '75 that the conversation took place between the governor and Hudson Milner and we started the program that spring. So that was a real bonus for me. Jim Edgy and Bill Hull had been from other states and I think it was a plus in my favor that I'd grown up in Frankfort and that my father had been involved in politics. He had died in 1971 so it was before I had come back to work at the arts council but he still had known a lot of people and growing up here I knew a lot of people even though I'd been out of the state for practically 20 years. It's also something that just doesn't exist any longer. Politics was just in the process then of changing from being very person oriented and depending upon who you knew to being a little bit different and there weren't the lobbying groups. It was just another situation then, but very political; very political.

*E. What was most frustrating to you?*

It's hard to say. I think that basically it was the fact that there was so much that we could see that needed to be done and we had just such a small staff and such a small amount of money that we wanted always to be able to do more than we could. We needed more people, more money, more skills. The skills were fairly meager and it was a matter of trying to learn more about how to do our job because, as you know, at that point in the formative years all the people in state arts council work were coming from other places, from other fields. As a result it was a wonderful diverse, rich mix and I think that was great but at the same time there were a lot of things that we needed to know; that I would have liked to have known that I didn't know anything about. There wasn't really any place to go to learn those things. As things developed our staff had to continue learning, too. I think the frustration was simply that there was so much to do and not enough staff or money to do what we needed to do.

*F. What was most surprising to you?*

I don't so much was surprising. Jim Edgy had always said, "Come to Kentucky and work at the arts council." This was in '72. He said, "There are so many good people in the state; so many interesting people out there, more than you will ever meet anyplace." And I thought he was exactly right. It was surprising that there were so many really gifted people and people who understood the arts; people who were committed to the arts everywhere in the state. Thinking about my own life, I don't think there is any job I've ever had where I met so many wonderful people and people who were really seriously committed to the arts and had great integrity. What we needed to do was to mobilize those people on the community arts level or state arts level or whatever because it was really a strong group when you begin to put them together.

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

NEA – I think that it was strong from the very beginning because of Bill Hull and Jim. They had begun by establishing very strong ties with the NEA so, when I came on, the groundwork laid. Just a few months after I came, Nancy Hanks came to Kentucky for a visit in Louisville and we were very much on their radar screen and they seemed to be always very interested in what we were doing and always very supportive. I don't think we were ever turned down for a grant. We always had a very strong relationship with them. I was on a number of different panels at the NEA and it seems to me we had a lot of task forces and discussion groups that met at the NEA on everything from arts in education to the Federal/state partnership and so I was very much involved in things that were going on at the NEA. So that was a strong relationship.

SAA's – As far as the other state arts agencies, as soon as I became director, it was just at that time that NASAA was beginning to form. I came in on the ground floor of that and worked very intensively with NASAA the entire time I was director because that was another organization that was just beginning and, in thinking of the states collectively, we were able to really, I think, do a great many things. That was exciting to be on the ground floor of NASAA. I learned so much by talking to other directors and finding out what was going on in other states and that always provided for me not only perspective but I could compare what we were doing with other people and sometimes I learned a lot.

Sometimes I learned what I didn't think we should be doing as well as what I thought we should be. I had no relationship with ACA. It had become at that point NASAA; it had evolved into that. It seems to me in January of '75 that there was a meeting in California and that was a big organizational meeting that I went to.

LAA's – We didn't have very many at first. By 1974/75, there really was not...there were very few and that was a major thrust of ours. We had these performing arts sponsoring groups throughout the state. We had about fifteen of those and they could be a nucleus for a community arts organization but at that point they were still just in the business of sponsoring a season of performing arts and selling season tickets. We were able to offer technical assistance as to how to do all of that, but they were not thinking in terms of being a community arts council. That came later and in '78 we hired a community arts director who really did begin to build up the community arts program in the state.

*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?*

I'm not sure exactly what it was. It seems that always the money was a major issue because we didn't have that much as states in 1974/75, back in those days. We felt that we needed to have more money; that we knew better how to spend it; that we were closer to the field than the Endowment. In a place like Kentucky we had few organizations who had developed enough to be able to qualify for NEA grants. It was just really a small number so we felt that we could handle money here in a way that would be impossible for them to. I would say that with the state arts agency field that money and power was always at the crux just at the problem. Now the regionals, interestingly enough, the Southern Arts Federation was formed just about that time; I think it was '75. I remember that we were given an opportunity to join a regional arts organization and Mid-Atlantic was one that we could have been in very naturally and the Southern Arts Federation was another. I guess it was because of my own proclivity toward thinking of ourselves more as southern than mid-Atlantic, we went with the Southern Arts Federation because it seemed to me that our cultural heritage was more southern than it was mid-Atlantic. The Southern Arts Federation directors came together and I don't think we were really sure what we were going to do with an organization on a regional level but we knew money was available and we knew that through the resources of all of these states we would be able to pull in a lot more money. As far as Kentucky was concerned, it would also give our Kentucky organizations a new venue to be out in the South to tour and we could also learned a great deal by being part of a regional organization. I thought, too, that it was good for our chairman who would then be on board to learn a lot about other states are functioning. I would say on the whole that was a very exciting part of my experience as a state arts agency director, working with the Southern Arts Federation, and I was very much involved with that as well.

*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?)*

I think to go back to Governor Carol, there was one anecdote that I remember that was typical of him. He had been a state representative and a state senator and lieutenant governor and then governor. He knew politics and the legislative process inside and out. He was a person who knew the budget intimately; it was amazing. So that when our budget request came before him, I found this out afterward that he said, "Why the arts council needs another secretary and they haven't asked for it, but give them the money." He was so aware of what we were doing and we were not the only agency that he was that aware of but he was the kind of person who understood what was needed and he was willing to be such a micro-manager that he saw we needed more money for secretarial support. I always thought that that said a lot about that world at that time because certainly now it's totally different; totally different.

*J. How did you use your time?*

*1. Can you describe a prototypical day?*

I would say a typical day in the 74/75 period really dealt...there was some certainly work at the desk with correspondence and phone calls and meeting with people in the office but I would say that a major part of our day was spent out in the field traveling going to arts events and that meant often working day and night and weekends. It was an all consuming job. We didn't do the advocacy or lobbying of public officials unless it was, say, a local judge or a local leader that we were trying to help local people establish some kind of an arts organization. So I would meet with mayors and people like that. I would say at the beginning the emphasis really was on knowing the state and of getting out into the state and making ourselves known. We also did a lot from the very beginning working with other government agencies because we had some wonderful ones to work with who were very strong. We have a state heritage commission, historic preservation, and it's one of the top agencies in the country in that field. So we always worked with them; with the department of libraries, certainly with the department of education because their artists-in-the-schools program and so we did a lot with other state agencies. I noticed in going back over my notebooks and agenda books for that period that we had met with the Council on Aging, for instance, tried to get some programs on the arts into some aging centers, senior citizen centers. I remember we sent a poet to be in residence in a correctional institution for young men in Lexington. So we were always trying to establish ties with other agencies because, of course, they would have some money to help us out in supporting these projects and I also thought it was good business that we would have ties with other state agencies. We did do a great deal at that point with other agencies. We had some readings in libraries across the state and we had a very good link with the libraries. We didn't do anything with planning at that point. We were really too busy just trying to deal with what was at hand. I realize now how important that is and, of course, I did in the late '70's; we did so much more with planning but at that point in 74/75 we were just trying to keep our head above water. And I see you also have program development. We did a lot with that. And then no fundraising.

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

\_\_\_\_ *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)*

*Did you assign percentages to these at all?* No, I didn't because I thought that was difficult. I would certainly say that, when it comes to field/constituency communication, I would say at least 50%.

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

Yes, of course, that brings me up to 85. At the beginning I was still traveling much, much more. As we increased our staff, I was staying in the office more and doing a different kind of traveling, not so much to constituents but more to bigger projects that we were involved in and then state and regional and national travel. I would say that that was a major change; that having more staff who were able to do more of the actual work out in the field whereas my work was more thinking about strategic planning, thinking about the future, thinking about connections, thinking about what changes needed to be made. So I would say that was a major change during that period.

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?*

There were several things and one that I wanted to mention. When I became director, I suddenly became aware of all of these possibilities for doing things that existed, grants that were available. With a great deal of my youth? I jumped right in. We got first a design arts grant from the NEA to establish a design assembly and that turned into something; I hadn't realized quite how much it had done until I looked back through my files. We brought together a lot of decision makers in the state to talk about how the state made design decisions and, of course, what we found was it was all political; everything was a payoff. And I remember one person said, "We can't have really good design in state buildings because then people would think we were spending too much money," which was just, I thought, such a fallacious argument but nonetheless that was the view. We did raise awareness, I think, and in a sense it laid the groundwork for a major state performing arts facility, the Kentucky Center for the Arts which was built in the 80s. When we got the design assembly grant and started working with various people; I guess about a dozen people...architects, planners, and so forth...we worked with as a core group and then we had a state meeting with all of the major, at that point they were just...divisions in the state including transportation, education, practically all of the people who would be involved in building and any design project. The governor said at that point...we met with the governor from time to time... and he said, "I never make design decisions." Twenty minutes later in the conversation, we were talking about the Center for the Arts in Louisville and he said, "Well, I think it should be right on the Ohio River, right at a primal spot that you would see as you come into town." I'll never forget one of our members of the council said, "Governor, you've just made a design decision." I thought that was great. We did have this design advisory council and that I think did

feed into the planning for the Kentucky Center for the Arts which turned out to be a major change for the state and I think a milestone for development of arts in state. Also in thinking about those grants that were so enticing out there, in the spring of '74 the department of education, I think it was, in Washington had a grant that they made available to I think ten states in the country for using the arts in desegregation. I believed strongly in that principle and so did Jim Edgy. We had one of our artists-in-the-schools was a filmmaker. She was also a teacher; did many things and she was so smart and she knew everybody in the school system and she said she would be willing to sit down in the three weeks or so we had to write the grant to pull this very complicated application together. She did it and it was great and we got the grant. By the next September...that was in March; it was due the first of April...she became the first director of this special arts project which pulled together all of the Louisville arts groups. It pulled them into the schools to provide school programming. She went on to become quite a well known playwright on the national scene and won the Pulitzer Prize in the '80s for one of her Broadway plays. That was a real plus because we were able to have that grant renewed for about four years so that really helped establish in Louisville schools a relationship between the performing arts groups in Louisville and the schools. Finally when grant ended we had established I think a strong enough liaison with the schools that they funded the position themselves the following year and I think it's still in operation. So that was an example of maybe overextending ourselves but it worked out really well. I think I had a third one but that's enough for right now.

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

Not a great deal. I did some consulting with New Jersey and Tennessee afterward and then I have run into people since then. I moved from Kentucky to Philadelphia. I kept my house in Kentucky but I was spending most of my time in Philadelphia because I married in '84 just as I was leaving the arts council. So I was up there and, of course, their state arts agency was in Harrisburg. I did go over once to meet their director whom I had not known before but I worked with several arts organizations one of whom did try to have a relationship with the state arts agency without much success. At that point though I was doing other things so I really didn't have any direct contact with state arts agencies. I was working with a group called Young Audiences of Pennsylvania and at our annual meetings or sometimes when we were being evaluated, an old friend would come through from the state arts agency world so that was fun.

*A. If so,*

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

I don't really know. I just know that when we were starting out, everything was freewheeling. It was so open and so creative because everything was possible whereas I think now everything has become much more administrative partly because of restricted funding but also the atmosphere in the world has changed so much that I think it's very, very different from what we knew.

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

The competencies and skills of present employees, I would think they would be much more professional coming into the field whereas that was totally different back in the old days.

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

That's hard to say. Personally I have a lot of interests and I think that one of the things that was exciting to me about the state arts agency work then was that there was so much room for taking big ideas and doing something with them. I don't that same freedom probably possible today. I don't know that I would go so much into state arts agency work as I might go into arts work but in a specific field.

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

Definitely. Definitely. I think that this is a young field; it's been 40 years now basically that it's existed. I think the way in which it's grown, the way in which it's professionalized and it's become much more professional. It wasn't so much that we weren't professional but I think that people were just learning what they had to do back in those early days.

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

Just because I was doing other things and I think more that than anything else because I was involved in other pursuits. Any time there was an opportunity to know more, any articles or anything that was happening, I would always try to find out more but I didn't make an effort to do that.

*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?*

As I said earlier, I always personally liked being involved in things at the beginning. For me that is the most satisfying time; getting things started, formulating structures, relationships, planning, whereas just tending shop doesn't interest me as much. I would say I learned a great deal personally from the whole experience. I think that Kentucky has grown so much from that time. I'm not so sure what it's like today but certainly a lot of the work that they're doing is just as exciting now as it was probably was 15 years ago or 20 years ago.

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

I think that they basically need to have a passion for the arts. They need to have a real genuine feeling for the arts; a commitment to the arts. I think it all starts there and, if you don't have that, you can be in any field but it's the passion for the arts; it's that deep commitment that I think makes the big difference. I think also that that is probably coupled with a sense of integrity. That's key to the arts, integrity, and if you don't have that you don't have anything.

*V. Information about you:*

*A. Education - University of Kentucky*

- 1. Educational level (has, ba, some grad, ma, PhD) - MA*
- 2. Major/field - English*

*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 been teaching previously at an independent school in Pennsylvania outside Philadelphia in Bryn Mawr and I was head of the English department there. The English that we taught was a combination of literature but a great emphasis on writing. I did a great deal with writing and working with students on writing. Before I went to the Baldwin school to teach, I had worked as an editor so words were always my thing and that was always what I was most interested in. My sister was a filmmaker so I worked with her on several films that she made so that was another interest of mine, filmmaking. Those were the two particular interests that I had. I had also done a lot of work with music in college. That was a very strong interest on my part so when the performing arts position was available, that fit in with my interests and also with some of my skills.

*Did you know Jim Edgy before you went back to Kentucky?*

Right. He had been here first as head of an independent school in Frankfort, Capital Day School. I knew him when he first came to Frankfort because I would come home at Christmas and summers and visit my family so I knew him early on when he was still at the Capital Day School, headmaster there. Then when he went to the arts council, of course, I kept up with him and when he was named head of the arts council, when Bill Hull left, that's when he said to me, "You should come back to Kentucky."

*C. Work Experience*

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

I had no other arts management experience. I had basically been in teaching and then the little editing job that I did there for awhile and that was it.

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

Just the two years that I was director of performing, literary and media arts at the Kentucky Arts Council

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

No. In fact I always really had a kind of aversion to government. Growing up in Frankfort the state capital, state government always seemed not to attract very bright people or competent people but I learned that that wasn't true when I got into the business here; that there were wonderful people in state government; very talented people from all over. So that was a great surprise. That was a very positive learning for me.

*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;*  
SEE RESUME

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

I do a lot of editing and I do some research. My husband writes from time to time and I edited one book that he wrote and we worked on a project together and I edited that conference report. It was about one hundred pages long. I do a little writing but basically editing and research; that's more what I'm doing. I did a film with my sister and did the research for it. It was just a short film about a museum house. It was about the people who originally lived there in 1800. So that was more recent. Research is done just on particular projects.

*E. Demographic information:*

1. *Gender* - Female
2. *Age range now* - 70
3. *geographic region he or she lives now* - Frankfort
4. *political/partisan identification* – Democrat; very strong; liberal; progressive

I can't even remember talking about political parties then. So many things during the course of my years did surprise me. They were not during those early years of 74/75 but people didn't talk about liberals and conservatives the way they do now back in those days and the whole controversy about censorship just didn't exist then either. We were really quite free. But I remember one time and this was after '75, a group of us were at NASAA at some kind of meeting and I can't even remember what it was but I remember clearly that we were talking about the purpose of state arts councils and what they were doing. I said something about the fact that it seemed to me that one of the major aims of the arts was to change people's viewpoints so that they could transcend themselves, that it was a window into themselves that other things don't provide and that it was so important that arts were a change agent. And everybody looked at me as though I were crazy. They never saw that at all. They never thought of the arts in that way at all. I always thought that was interesting. It was just that small group; I don't know there were probably six or seven people there. But it's funny because you work with people over the years and there are just whole areas you don't touch; you don't understand that they don't see it the same way you do.

*Anything else you want to add?*

Let me add a couple of things. I think that one thing that always...and I'm not even sure why it interested me...but new technologies always interested me and that occurred back in the early 70's when we were working with video and using video out in community situations. We hired a media person on our staff early on in the mid-70s. That was just about the time computers were on the horizon and people were looking toward computers and what they could do. I became involved in a national project, the National Information Systems Project, which I realize now was kind of a nerdy thing. We had to set up the categories for computerizing all information on the arts and it was kind of like writing a dictionary but I knew that in doing that you were going to be determining what kinds of information would be collected and at that point we didn't have information about the arts so that as far as lobbying goes or getting money for certain kinds of arts or whatever, we didn't have the information. I saw that as just a critical part of the development of state arts agencies. I don't think other people seemed to get excited about it the way I did. I thought it was really important and I could see, too, that getting ...of course, it was way before the years of the internet or anything like that...but it seemed to me quite clear that we could use that as a way of communicating very quickly using computers to communicate among the state arts agencies so we could mobilize people right away, we could pass on information and that it was really important that we all be collecting information on same basis because then we would have a body of information to present. It would be a real strength. That was something that I was very interested in. And another, I always felt that on the Southern Arts Federation we had a real challenge in that, since board was created by state arts agencies and the way it existed, it was set up with representation of the director and the chairman, that it was pretty obvious that no Black people would be on board, You could see with the changes in the 70's that were taking place that there at some point would be some pressure put on the board to make certain that more Black people were represented in some way. That was something I really believed in and really pushed because I felt that was critical. We did then create a way for Black people to be represented on the board and to do much more with African-American arts. I thought that was an exciting breakthrough for the South and for the Southern Arts Federation; to really make a push toward this and not just pay lip service to it. And we did the same thing here in Kentucky by having person who worked with minority arts development and she also worked with disabled to try to push all organizations in the state to make their facilities accessible. At the very end of the period I was here, there was a strong push towards that, too. We didn't have any grants to individual artists for a long time until the early 80s. I think that now that's one of the greatest strengths of the Kentucky Arts Council is their program of individual artist's grants. I think it was only natural that we had to mature to the point where we had strong organizations and strong community development and then we could begin to work more closely with encouraging the individual artists. We did have partly because of my interest in literature and writing, we had some wonderful statewide writers meetings. We had a celebration of Kentucky writers back in the 70's and we brought in all of the up and coming writers in the country who were from Kentucky. We had a couple of hundred people who came for workshops and readings and so forth. We continued that. We had smaller sessions like that from time to time where we sponsored readings or we would

bring in people from outside the state to judge literary magazines in the state and the give readings. We emphasized writing a great deal. I don't think that's done so much any more. Both Jim and I were interested in that because he came out of the same background as I, teaching English. Kentucky has a strong tradition in writing. Crafts and writing are probably the two strongest arts traditions in the state. I always felt one of our job was to nurture the indigenous arts that we had as much as we could and make people aware of what we had. I will mention one major change. In 1981 we had a new governor whose wife was a former Miss America and she took on crafts as her major interest and they reorganized our agency and put us in with a whole group of people, abolished the Kentucky Arts Commission. Then because of pressure from people all around the state and from the NEA because the NEA said, "If you don't have an independent state arts council, we can't give you money." And the pressure was so great that we were reestablished as the Kentucky Arts Council with a board and things were really not terribly different from before except we were within this larger agency; not quite as independent. They took half our staff away; made us reduce from I think it was 13 to 5 people. They added a crafts marketing division which became a part eventually of the Kentucky Arts Council and that has been extremely successful. They have several big crafts markets every year and give a lot of visibility and opportunity for selling for Kentucky craftspeople so that's really been I think probably very positive for crafts people in the state. I felt though that our job was not so much in marketing crafts because a lot of times what this would mean is that they would get orders for say 50 of the same object and that didn't seem to be very creative. Our emphasis seemed to be more on people who were not able to be in the commercial field but I think this has certainly done well and I'm happy that it has.

The one thing that I had really meant to emphasize was...I'm not even sure where it fits in now... but I think that one of the most important things that I felt at the arts council was to develop a staff that was very strong and who had a particular philosophical outlook; who had the same kind of commitment, a sense of integrity, knowledge about the arts and a real people oriented staff. I felt that one of the most important things that we could offer as a service to the state were people who were committed to this particular vision of what the arts in Kentucky could be. I think that is extremely important and that is what we always strived for and I think we succeeded in doing that. I think that was one of our greatest strengths. I didn't want people who would see it just as a job and as a result most of my people were not married because they just simply couldn't travel and do as much as we needed to have done but were committed enough to be able to work strange hours and weekends. There was a wonderful esprit de corps and I think that's extremely important and that's one thing that made it so much fun and also made it so creative because we had a wonderful creative group of people.