

Craig Gilborn

Executive Director of Delaware from July, 1969 to June, 1972

Interviewer: Susan Neumann

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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?

It was an idea that originated in the Jack Kennedy administration and I think came to fruition maybe during Lyndon Johnson. I was not involved directly with the formation of the arts council in Delaware except I was the first director. Before I went to Delaware in the Winterthur Museum where I worked for five years before taking this arts council job, we lived in Richmond, Virginia. I was at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. I remember before Jack Kennedy's assassination there was a big to-do about the start of a National Endowment for the Arts. I'm not sure about the humanities but I'm pretty sure that the Arts Endowment they were talking about and it was televised in an auditorium somewhere in Richmond, Virginia. That would have been 1962-63. So it goes back so I was dimly aware of an effort to try and get funding for the arts.

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 no master plan. The push was an embarrassment to the Arts Endowment possibly. Delaware was the last state to have an arts council. There was resistance to it I guess in the legislature, mostly from down state Republicans who were conservatives. Delaware is divided roughly and politically. It's more moderate north of what is called The Canal and south of The Canal in Delaware is more conservative. They had refused to create a state arts council but by 1969, when they finally got around to it in Delaware, they had a different governor. It was Russell Petersen. He's a moderate Republican; he and others including the chairman of the Delaware State Arts Council who was appointed, Polly Buck. Her husband was C. Douglas Buck whose father had been a governor of Delaware years earlier. Doug Buck who is now deceased was a DuPont; his mother was a DuPont. Doug Buck was in politics in Delaware as was Polly Buck. She was a kind of a Rockefeller Republican and was liked by people in both parties. She was a great first chairman of the Delaware State Arts Council. She had luncheon with a guy from the National Endowment for the Arts. He was the head of the Literary Program. His name was Leonard Randolph; a very forceful guy. I remember he came up and had lunch with Polly and they were working out....I joined them for lunch in Wilmington because I told her I was interested in this job. I don't remember how I heard about it. There must have

been something in the paper about Governor Petersen appointing the council for the state. I was at the Winterthur Museum which is just a few miles north of Wilmington in Delaware and I may have called her and told her about my interest because by that time I'd been there five years at the Winterthur Museum so I was ready for change. She and I had lunch together and we hit it off fine and then there was another luncheon with Len. I remember he had a piece of paper and he was trying to figure out to show her and to show me the numbers. I think that first year, for example...I'm just pulling these numbers out of my head...was about \$45,000 you could get from Washington and the state was expected to raise a like amount or more. That might have included in-kind services or something so they were working away on the paper. But I think no one in Delaware had any great vision for the arts. It was just something worth doing. I was not an artist myself but I had worked by that time in a couple of museums. I was about 32 at the time so I was committed; went to the theatre and things like that. I was not an administrator although that's what I became. So we just had a great time between Polly and I and the board was already appointed. It was generally representative from around the state of Delaware in the visual and performing arts. They formed the two legs of the council and there were about six or seven on each committee. There was no big vision. It was just to get a state arts council who qualified for that federal funding and then go from there.

I'll tell you one story about the guy who was the director of the Pennsylvania State Arts Commission. He wore one of those silver loose bracelets with a parachute on it. I don't know if he was in the military or something. He liked to talk a lot. He talked about how he was in high school with John Updike, the novelist and he bragged about how he and his friends used to push John Updike into a locker at school. So much for the arts. I don't know if that's true or not but he told the story.

I was at the Delaware State Arts Council from '69 to '72 so something like that. I met a lot of people and there was lots of fun going to things in Washington; the Kennedy Center, we got there and up to New York with ACA. Was Nancy Hanks the chair? She was another Rockefeller protégé. Everybody liked Nancy. I didn't know her very well. I met her a couple of times but she and Polly Buck hit it off and eventually Polly went to Washington to the Endowment. She left her husband or divorced him and she went to Washington and I don't know if she was in the Music Program or something there. Polly was a very well-to-do, handsome kind of straight-shooting kind of a person but well connected unfortunately in a wing of the Republican Party that got totally demolished. But she went to Washington at some point not long after I left because she worked with Nancy Hanks so she had connections there and she bought a house and remarried. She lived in Georgetown. She would be in her 80's now. She was very interesting. Her husband at that time...five years ago was the last I heard of her...was Joe Krakora and she was a friend of Sophie Consagra, a personal friend. She was in Georgetown last I heard. She had four children. She was married to Doug Buck and very much involved in things in Delaware. She is a great lady.

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 think we did a lot. There were only two in the office and initially our office....we used the Governor's office in Wilmington. We had our own office but it was part of a suite of about three offices and the Governor when he came to Wilmington would have press conferences in the bigger room in the back and we had kind of a middle office and then there was an outer office. So we saw him fairly often. He would come in but we were a dotted item so-called in the budget so we were connected to the Governor's Office at that time. After I left, the state arts council I think became part of a larger division or department of the state. I'm not sure where that would be; maybe the archives department or something. So we were right downtown. Then after about a year and a half, we moved across the street into quarters. I don't know if they were contributed but the Governor's office was donated to us. We didn't have to pay for that. I'm not sure; I don't think we paid for the space that we got across the street in a larger office and we used to have small exhibits in both offices. There was one guy. We had exhibits of work from the University of Delaware artists. There was one guy who was a photographer in Wilmington. He was a Black man who kind of fancied himself as being a serious photographer so he brought in his photographs. Some of the pictures were kind of pin-up pictures. There was nothing obscene or erotic about them but some scantily dressed woman holding on to the banister of the stairs or something. I looked at those and I said, "I don't think we can display this one." He couldn't understand this was the Governor's office. We did nothing in my three years to embarrass the Governor. There were a couple of issues. We brought in that Shakespeare by that John...that guy from England...who did these stripped down, bare versions of Shakespeare. And we brought in a couple of critics. One was Otto Dekom and the other...I've forgotten his name. Both of them were old timers. One of them acted up in the garden across the border in Pennsylvania at that great garden there and they had a theatre up there. One of these journalists liked to play in Twelfth Night and so he was an expert on Shakespeare. He didn't like this Miller version of it. They traveled to cities and I think they got grants maybe from the Endowment. Anyway he didn't like the play, this treatment of Shakespeare. I've forgotten, what was the question? We did a lot. That spring of 1972, they had a group of people in the town threw a great big party at the Delaware Arts Museum for me, kind of a goodbye party and I was surprised at the number. I don't know who organized it. It wasn't Polly Buck. She was there but I was very lucky to have a good council who were ready to learn and didn't have a lot of the answers. Between Polly and her council, we did a lot.

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

The most important thing was that we established a state arts council for the first time in Delaware. It was the last of 50 states so that was a big plus. We did one really original thing. I think it was original but I'm not sure any other council did although Michigan had something like it. We leased a modern new moving van and turned it into a gallery on wheels with a big spanking new tractor. We redesigned the interior and the exterior had graphic design with Delaware State Arts Council on it. We had an architect helping us and the inside had carpeting and the walls were all nicely finished. The first show we

did was a Wyeth show. I forgot what we called it but it about that school of illustration. It had connections in both Wilmington and Kenneth Square to the north where they Wyeth's still live up there. It was about Pyles. There were about a dozen, two dozen artists who studied under several people including Pyles and N.C. Wyeth was one of them. So anyway we had one great big N.C. Wyeth painting at the end of this; the first thing you'd see when you entered this and then there were these lesser known artists with paintings on the side so there were maybe about 16 paintings altogether. It really looked very good. You entered on one side and exited on the other. The moving company usually had contractors moving aerospace, space rockets, whatever. They were very good. They were in Wilmington and they were very cooperative and they liked to show off that way although there was no advertising. We sent I think a couple of shows on that. I was familiar with these. I had done something like this when I was at the Virginia Museum. I think we called it the Art Mobile but we sent it around for two or three shows. It was very successful. I don't think it went anywhere but it was probably one of the more original things that the Delaware Council did. We did the other things. We had conferences; forums on the arts in Delaware. We subsidized tickets for various theatrical performances. We assisted with a couple of documentary films that were made. The issue always was balancing the Black community in Wilmington. Wilmington was one those cities that blew up when Dr. King was assassinated in 1968. That was just the year before I arrived but again there was very little experience even around the nation with these state arts council and that was the difficulty but also the fun of being on the ground floor. I remember designing on one sheet; there are now probably five sheets you have to fill out in order to get money from Delaware but on one sheet. I think I had one was cash income and then in-kind stuff which I called soft money. That term got to be used; it's still used today but it was just on one sheet. Somebody would ask you a question so you'd send them this form. But we were making things up as we went along. I would look at it and then refer it either to the visual arts committee or the performing arts committee and they would look at it. I might make a recommendation or they'd talk about it. Sometimes they knew what was involved and so they'd act on it and say they approved it. Then I guess there was a voucher or something that was sent to Dover, the capital, and I guess a check was cut. I should mention that my secretary was Jean Bovard. She was a handsome lady probably about late 30's. She was a little bit older than I was. She was in community theatre. She had a great singing voice. She had a smile that would just...I remember when I bought a Polaroid camera for the council and I asked her to stand over by the window so I could take her picture and she turned on a smile you just wouldn't believe. I didn't know you could do that. She was lots of fun and she was also very effective and she was involved with the performing arts. She'd been in a club or something up in New York City for a time before she got married. She had a couple of kids. She was a great assistant and she would always, if something was a problem, she'd get on the phone and call the state and say, "Where's the check? We're waiting for the check. So it was Jean Bovard, Craig Gilborn, Polly plus the dozen or so members of the Council.

E. What was most frustrating to you?

The critics: Otto Dekom. The rumor ran and I was at odds with Dekom before I was at the state arts council. In fact, the executive editor and another managing editor took me to lunch at the Hotel DuPont when I wrote a letter to the editor. Apparently they thought it was pretty good because I was talking about this Otto Dekom who was so negative. But anyway the rumor was...I don't know, he may or may not be alive....he's a bachelor; had a bald head and a big round face. The rumor was that he collected hockey stamps or something but he was also kind of a lecherous guy, too, because Jean Bovard, my secretary said they put him at a table at one of these dinner theatre things. Otto would sit close to the stage and he'd be ogling these women up there and then he'd go back and write a column about it. I think he was critical of that play "Tea and Sympathy." It was a play and then it was made into a movie but that's where he was coming from so he was harmless but he'd write these columns and stuff. Also there was always the down state Republicans. I think one named Castle. After awhile it was no fun whether the state arts council would get its money or was going to get cut back. We didn't because Russell Peterson, the governor, was in our corner but even those conservative Republicans liked Polly Buck. It's very important to have people who are connected. It's unfortunate in a way but it's true. Another thing we did, we brought two large sculptures to the Rodney Square right in the heart of the city opposite the A. I. DuPont office building and the bank, DuPont Hotel. Delaware has not broken any frontiers intellectually or artistically. They're kind of middle of the road types. Anyway we went up to Connecticut to North Haven about four of us to look at in this yard where they fabricated these great sculptures and we got two on loan that were brought on a flatbed truck to Wilmington from Connecticut. One was by Rosenthal and was that cube that turns on its corner. There's one in Manhattan, down in lower Manhattan. There used to be anyway. The other was a bright yellow spiral. The Rosenthal was black, the cube, and then the other was a yellow spiral; a very bright yellow with a succession of large to small sections that kind of spiraled in and was hollow in the middle so you could look through it. So these two creatures from outer space arrived on flatbed truck. We got a crane because they had to lift them over the top of telephone and electrical wires. So they picked this up. The television cameras are around. This was just before Memorial Day weekend and so they put these down in front of the hotel and then the park itself is down about ten feet lower on the lower level. These were up on a big wide sidewalk near the hotel on one side and this lower park and the park isn't very big. Then the trucks all disappear and then the calls start coming in. Some secretary from the DuPont Company who had offices there said it was ruining her lunch. She liked to eat on the steps there that dropped down into the park but she thought these things were just ruining her lunch. It was things like that. I think we even went on a talk show and people called in about it. It was just what was needed in that conservative town but it was really kind of a pain in the neck at the same time. The fire chief got into the act because there was going to be a parade with a stand right near by and the fire chief said this Rosenthal cube....you could push it to rotate it....he said somebody's going to get brained with this thing if they turn it with this crowd and so you've got to move it or do something. So again Polly Buck stepped in. She called Hal Haskell, the mayor, who was another great guy and he was one of the owners of Abercrombie and Fitch in New York City but his home was up in chateau country where the DuPonts and others lived. He was a good Republican, too, and he put an end

to it. He told the fire chief to cool it; not to go around and create panic. I guess they wanted to put a barrier or something around it. Of course, remember the war in Vietnam was still on and it was really pretty touchy. A lot of people were pretty sensitive about that issue. I guess the frustration...that's about it though. That modern sculpture, that was okay. It was a lot of work.

F. What was most surprising to you?

The people were all very nice, at least the people I worked with. Things have changed since 1972. People have the answers now and it's the whole culture enterprise to a very large extent dependent on money; that's the overriding concern. That wasn't for us. If we just had \$50,000, we'd figure out and we'd say we'll do that but now it's another ballgame so I would say to have a goodbye party for the departing executive director of the Delaware State Arts Council says something about the quality of the people who were involved in Delaware. I'm trying to think of the surprises. I think the Kennedy Center opened at that time and Leonard Bernstein's opera opened there and that was exciting. I was there but it was exciting and lots of fun and nobody had hard and fast answers.

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

NEA – I think it was very positive largely because of the Republican connection. The Democrats there were okay and eventually I think they came to power and are still there. Joe Biden, I remember when he was and his wife were living at a twin club and I remember his dog in the pool when nobody was around so we knocked on the door and got him out. This was before he was even thinking of politics and was just down in Syracuse or something. As far as all of the state arts councils, Delaware was in close proximity to Washington. There were well connected Republicans of all persuasions in Delaware who went to Washington and Polly Buck was involved in a lot of that and I think she was very disappointed with some of the things that went on in her own party. She was chairman at one of the conventions, maybe it was during the war, but she was one of the ladies who stood up there. She was chairman but it all kind of petered out between divorces and with the right conservative Republicans.

SAA's – Not very much. It was mostly reporting or rumors, you know that New Jersey was having a problem or Pennsylvania. You'd go to these occasional meetings with the ACA. Was it John Hightower? You'd go to these meetings and that's where you'd meet members of other state arts councils and you'd learn. For example, the Art Train in Michigan was a hot button thing but there was no direct relationship. That may have changed under Sophie Consagra or in the current Delaware State Arts Council.

ACA – We attended there meetings. I don't think we belonged to it but I liked their magazine. I don't know if they still...are they still around? It was a good idea. I knew a couple of the people there but I was never greatly involved in it but it was kind of a consortium of arts groups or something to speak on behalf of the arts and culture in Washington and state capitals.

LAA's – Some, not a great deal like the Delaware Art Museum. We did a couple of things. One of the things we did is we had these sculptures made by a student at the University of Delaware; I think it was a student. It was only a few thousand dollars; it wasn't a great deal of money. These stood about 9 feet high and they were made in triangular section so you'd have three of these sheets of plastic that were different colors like red, blue and green. They were made by a plastics company up in Philadelphia. He made about ten of these sculptures and they created a kind of an environment and you put these three that were glued or taped together so they were quite high and they were on cement bases so that they fit into those bases. I'm not sure they were anchored; they must have been anchored somehow but insufficiently as it turned out. When you put these things maybe 15 feet apart in some sort of a pattern you could see reflections of yourself. We funded this and put them in kind of a meadow next to the Delaware Art Museum. It was a residential section of Wilmington. The Governor came and there was a kind of a reception of something. A day or two after they went up, there was this great wind storm and some of them were broken and busted and some of them were okay so I guess we left a few of them there. I don't know what happened to the cement bases of these things. Somebody may have used them for as anchors for their boats or something but it was worth doing and fortunately the governor saw it before it got blown down.

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?

No, there was no problem; there was just the aggravation of the conservatives who weren't really behind our efforts although the money was insignificant. We were always able to show that we were getting more money from Washington than we were getting from the state legislature. That mollified them, I suppose. If there was anything, it was that war in Vietnam and that has nothing to do with the state arts council but it was not a happy time. It was a matter of getting projects approved; the process and keeping your noses clean and staying out of trouble. But there was no serious scandal. Of course, it's been quite awhile now except those sculptures in the square and then the Shakespeare that Jonathan Miller did. I don't know if he's still alive or not. He was trained as a surgeon. He was English and he made a couple of movies. He was some kind of a genius.

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?)

The ally was Polly and Governor Petersen. Russell Peterson was a one-term governor. He had a doctorate in chemistry. He had worked for the DuPont Company, I don't know as what. I remember before I was with the arts council meeting him when he was running for governor and then he got elected. He was not chummy with Polly Buck because I think he was kind of a technocrat. He eventually got hung kind of up on environmental issues. He came out in support of protecting the wetlands in that area around the canal I told you about that divides the state north and south and he said he vowed he was not going to allow those wetlands to be dredged and pipes run across those

wetlands where birds were nesting and stuff and down state Republicans got on his case and he wasn't re-elected. I don't know who replaced but he left very soon after his first term. I was gone by that time and he went to the Audubon Society and became president of the Audubon Society so that shows where his heart was and he may I think be living in Rehobeth if he's still alive but he was good. So that was the political connection and Polly was great. She wasn't cynical and she knew her way around and she knew how to talk to people. Great with men because she could level with them but she wasn't tough either. She's not like those Texas women who boast about how they can be as nasty as the cowboys or whatever.

J. How did you use your time:

1. Can you describe a prototypical day?

It was a weekday plus some evenings and weekends. Usually I wrote most of the copy for little brochures and annual reports and stuff. It was a knack I had so there was that. Then there were press releases and Jean Bovard would send information off to the newspapers. We probably had a list of about 30 or 40 outlets that we'd send these stories about the state arts council is doing this and doing that and so we wrote that or we tried to get a reporter and/or a photographer to come and take pictures. We were pretty good at that and then there were always these letters coming in with requests for assistance and these you'd sort into visual and performing arts. It sounds so simple-minded and eventually those would be referred either back to applicant for more information or put in a little stack for the next meeting of the visual arts committee, for example. And then there were special events; openings and stuff like that. So you couldn't say....there was a routine to it but there were variations all the time. The pace of some of that stuff; I mean I had two or three martini lunches which was a disaster. I'll never do that again. The president....I don't know what his name was (father of Anna Steele)....he was with the Delaware Symphony Orchestra and took me to lunch somewhere. I think the third martini I was totally wiped out and I must say I'm living a much healthier life in Vermont or when I went off to the woods in the Adirondacks and then came to Vermont. I don't drink as much and I stopped smoking, too, so we're all living healthier lives I guess. So there was no set routine; that was the fun of it. I don't recall lying awake. I was probably more concerned about the war in Vietnam than I was about what I was going to do the next day and that was all because of this relationship with the chairwoman because she was a good drinker and smoker, too.

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

___ *Grant administration* - things came in and we judged them on their merit and we may have roughly divided things between visual and performing and then something out of the ordinary might have come up.

___ *advocacy/lobbying with public officials* - No, because I had no connections but everybody knew Polly; both parties knew Polly. They knew her in the city of Wilmington. They knew her in the Newcastle County which is the biggest county. It's up north in Delaware. I think Delaware's only got three or four counties. Her husband Doug Buck was the president or something of the county council or something and then

they knew her in Dover. She had a bookstore called Books Inc. She had it in a fringe area of the chateau country so it was not far from their home; less than a mile from their home but it was a big store so that made a big difference, just those connections that she had.

___ *field /constituency communication* - answering letters; receptions

___ *agency strategic planning* No. Nobody knew. The word “mission” never came up, thank goodness. I’ve worked at museums since leaving. I’m glad because that’s all they talk about. Well, what the mission has turned out to be in 2005, in the 21st century is raising money. Forget history and ballet and theatre and stuff like and frankly the mission is raising money.

___ *program development* - Art Mobile, we originated that. It was really kind of a pilot but nobody, so far as I know, picked up on that. There’s still a real need for getting these original works out in places where people or students who never get to see them.

___ *fundraising* I don’t think beat the bushes for extra money. Polly might have got some extra money but it was pretty much what the National Endowment for the Arts was giving out to the states beginning in 1969 was what the Delaware State Arts Council got together with whatever the council got from the Delaware legislature.

___ *partnership building (with other government agencies, with other types of nonprofits, with private sector, with arts/cultural agencies at other levels of government)* Again, places like the Delaware Art Museum and then there was the Wyeth Museum, the Brandywine River Museum. We had kind of informal relationships with those; nothing in a big formal way. There was the Delaware Historical Society but some of them I knew from when I was at the Winterthur Museum. It was a community of people interested in the arts but there was no big long-range planning that was going on, thank goodness. You see where I’m coming from. Organizations energies are being concentrated within organizations so the creative energies are all focused on talking to one another within the organization instead of looking out and reaching out. A lot of that and this happened in museums and I don’t know what else but I don’t think it’s a good development because what you’ve got now is fundraisers who are running cultural organizations, not artistic people.

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

No. I told Polly into my third year that I would probably be leaving the arts council and looking for a job in another museum. I had started as a student at the Winterthur Museum; a two-year graduate program at that museum which was Henry Francis DuPont’s great collection of early Americana and I was a student there. Then my wife and I went to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts for three years and then I got hired at the Winterthur Museum so we went back to Delaware for five years. Then I took this job and then in the third year I told Polly. In my third year they were talking about moving the state arts council into the Archives and Veterans Affairs. I didn’t like that one bit especially because the Veterans Affairs had been handled for about 50 years by some old bureaucrat. I’ve forgotten his name but nobody thought too much of him. He also ran historic sites or something but he was an old political hack so I didn’t relish that. They also hired a professional archivist who actually had a doctorate, a guy with a lean hungry

look that just wanted to suck up the state arts council. These guys don't like independent agencies floating around out there. Polly said not to worry; she would take care of this guy. Now I think he may be head of the archives in Washington, D.C. He wore this trench coat that came down about four inches off the floor. He had this kind of mousy little mustache. You can see how I'm not going to go places so I told Polly maybe it's time for me to get back to museums and actually she was a friend of someone and I got my job at the Adirondack Museum which was my third or fourth museum in 1972 so I moved up to Blue Mountain Lake in the Adirondacks and I was at that museum for more than 20 years.

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?

I did call the Delaware State Arts Council office. I guess they have an office in downtown Wilmington. It was their web page so I emailed and I said, "Hi. I was the first director and Polly Buck was the first chairman." I got a telephone call back from maybe it was the director but I guess it's much bigger and there really wasn't much interest there. This is also true in museums is that they don't people like Marley's ghost appearing on the doorstep and saying, "Well, I remember this place when it was hardly anything to it." I don't know how well the Delaware State Arts Council is doing but it's still there. It was lots of fun. We used to help fund the Nutcracker Suite around Christmas time and I should run through as I remember the members of the state council. The performing arts included the guy that was the head of the dance school/ ballet school and he was on the council. He was about in his 40's or 50's and he would appear in this Nutcracker Suite which is the big fundraising event I guess for the school. As he was getting older and longer in the tooth and he would admit it, so that when the prima ballerina or whoever it is came down from the city to dance the lead in this, she leapt up in the air and he was supposed to catch her, he practically fell back. I saw three Nutcracker Suites at the Hotel DuPont theatre. The chairman of the theatre department at the University of Delaware was another. Visual arts; there was Harley Funk who was an architect. There was Eugenia something who was kind of a lady painter; very gentle lady with a southern accent. She was a good watercolorist. We had a few others but I can't remember them but anyway they were all good. There was always a question and there still is. I think this issue of artists and to what degree should these councils and the National Endowment support living artists. They haven't solved that problem. Even the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, there are a lot of complaints about it and there are these contemporary art museums that are popping up and indeed the MOMA now begins to look like kind of an old curmudgeon and contemporary museums and the ones that are doing the performing arts, you know, theatre arts and street arts and stuff like that. So that is an issue. There was a little bit of it in my time. There was Charles Parks who was a very representational sculptor living up near Kenneth Square and his son, I think, may have followed him but he was in this tradition of the Andy Wyeth realism and he was always very sensitive on help for artists. He was well established. I don't know if he's still around but that is an issue that has not been resolved and, if anything, I think today that there's less support for artists than there may have been at that time partly because it's too sensitive for some people. They don't like to see cow dung or elephant

ding on pictures of the Madonna or something. I say the more the merrier but that's not going to get you very far. It was an exciting period but the war so unsettled the whole society that there were all kinds of things going on. People were making this plastic foam. I guess you mix a couple things together so you go to the corporate gallery and there'd be this pink lavender colored awful looking stuff. It was frozen to the steps; you know, 50 steps coming down so there was a lot of ferment and a lot of it was just people feeling their oats. It was all part of the unsettled times.

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

No. I met the Vermont Humanities and Arts guy at a meeting. It was an historic something or other meeting up in Airy, Vermont, north of here. So I go up and say, "You know, I was founding director of the Delaware State Arts Council," and he looked at me and then went back to the conversation. I don't know what you're going to do with all this historic information. The history just doesn't strike; even history museum will talk about fading history and the importance of it and then, when you ask them about their own institution, they look at you like you're crazy.

A. If so,

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

I think they've changed maybe in some ways for the worst. Both the Endowments have taken a beating and this is all connected to like the chancellor at the Smithsonian trying to have a Hall of Fame or something but this whole climate is very cautious and conservative and by in large the cultural figures, the leadership is missing. They're hiring people from business backgrounds and so on to run arts agencies and to run museums and the people have lost their nerves and boards are desperate for money so they say, "Well, let's hire this guy. He's got a good record on Wall Street so let's see what he can do." I should say that Nancy Hanks' assistant was Michael Straight and he was quite an interesting guy. I didn't realize how interesting until later when he was discussed but he came from a well-to-do family, studied in England and may have had some connection with some of those closet socialists in England during the 1930's; Anthony Blunt, a great art historian, and I don't know who else. I saw him at two or three meetings and he was very nice; very gentle and I guess everybody liked him a lot.

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

Things have changed. Today the whole approach to me; I've been retired for about ten years. I've been writing so I haven't been sitting around doing nothing but it's changed. I could see in my last years at the Adirondack Museum, the whole tendency was to be corporate so what that means is you have a board and they are making kind of a collective decision and you don't have directors or executive directors, now you have presidents and chairmen or director and president. Probably a good thing for museums since a president means that you have more authority than if you're just a plain old director which is what I was but the corporate approach is good for some things. For

serious fundraising, for capital drives and so on, it's good. The problem as far as programs is concerned I think is that it's hard to trace accountability. If everybody's responsible, nobody is and so now you have organizations and museums and dance companies and others where it's hard to put your finger on what the problem is. At least in my time you knew who was in charge. I'm not sure it's so easy to do now and when things get so bad, you can kick the director. It's more difficult in the arts. I do read a lot; I read the Times and I follow the arts but am not so involved. I do have views about it and I think the corporate approach spreads accountabilities around and it's not easy to act or move.

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

I might. I would not be hired. I probably couldn't get into a museum. The difference is, I will have to confess, that these arts programs that are being offered at NYU are really so good producing some high quality personnel. You get into a business plan; there's definite ways to do that. I don't know what a business plan for a museum would look like or what you put down in one column. If you've been to Harvard; you can come up with some answers. It's turned into quite a profession and there are clearer rules now than there were then. I don't know how many coming out can write and at Adirondack, we never had a development director; now they have six and are looking for another. It's the biggest department in museum.

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

I think so. It this incorporation; more business-like and yet it can be totally turned around by somebody who walks in with \$1 million. Money shouldn't dictate but it does to a large extent. Maybe it's just a function of age. If I were 25 or 35 now, I'd be out there chomping at the bit. And there are a lot more rules; just the laws that pertain to compliance, discrimination, none of that was around back then. There is now. For example, we're off the arts council thing now, but institutions have to have lawyer now. Before you do anything, you say, "Let's ask our lawyer what he thinks." That's no way to deal with the arts, but that's what's happen. Part of has to do with the conservative atmosphere and I take strong exception to Endowment tag line that "a great nation deserves great art." That is terrible. Only a nation that would go to war in Iraq would engage in that sort of a trite, hollow and shallow sentiment.

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

I went back into museums. There were some interesting people there and it was good. An interesting precedent, of course, is that Federal arts project in the '30's. Maybe some of those people who helped found the Endowment in the 60's had a memory of that and that was a great creative period.

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?

That's so long ago that I don't know. Would I do it again? I would. It was a good move partly because I met a lot of great people and it also got me the job at a museum as

director and I was really able to do a great deal at the Adirondack Museum so it opened the door thanks to Polly Buck. But I think the times have moved on so much...I'm not sure the values. They may be more competent today and more businesslike. There are a lot of things that have changed beginning with the computer and the web internet and stuff like that. In some ways it's easier getting in touch but I would do it again. I didn't make any mistakes but you always ask yourself, "What does this add up to?" especially when things move on so fast that you don't recognize what you left behind and people really don't care but that's what anybody....a minister, a clergyman, a college professor or even a journalist or correspondent....what did it all add up to? A correspondent or a columnist has got all these columns that they've written and is that really enough. So what it boils down to is an existential issue; it's a very personal one.

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

Just for personal reasons, be interested in the humanities and the arts, I mean as an undergraduate anyway. If you're going to specialize, do it after you have some of a grounding. I was an English major and also with History. I never regretted that and that was a good foundation. I also read a lot. Indeed, if I were interviewing someone for a job, it would depend at what level we were talking about, I'd want to know what they read. I'd like to know what newspapers and magazines they read and what books they liked, their favorite books, and see if there's any substance there. When I went, one of first things I did was I wrote copy for a brochure and it was a quotation from Joseph Conrad. It shows how naïve I was. It was from Lord Jim or something that a man falls into life like a man falls into the sea or something like that. I had this printed in white letters against a black background. Polly saw it and she didn't criticize it at all but it was so lugubrious. That was my first. Now again it's not chopped liver when you quote Joseph Conrad and there's a statement that is really pretty strong. Nobody ever criticized me for it, let me say, but I think I could discern in Polly's reaction. If you ever talk to her, ask her if she remembers that. We were all beginners. Also to have something you have a real feeling for in the arts. I don't think you have to be a poet or writer or something. I think you have to be able to express yourself and you have to think the arts are really important. In this society I think people who are interested in it and go to it don't realize how limited people's appreciation for the arts really is like that secretary who said that our two modern sculptures in Rodney Square were spoiling her lunch.

V. Information about you:

SEE RESUME

A. Education – University of Delaware

- 1. Educational level (has, ba, some grad, ma, PhD) - MA*
- 2. Major/field – BA in English; MA in Early American Culture*

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)

Naiveté was probably my strength. That's the great thing about being young is you just pack up things, put them on top of your car and go off. Now I hate to think about doing something like that so part of it is just feeling that what you do is important and really applying yourself and making a commitment to whatever it is you're doing and I always made a point is not to go sneaking around looking for a job on the side. I've always let my bosses know that I'd think it was time I should be leaving and generally it worked out pretty well.

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.

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

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond is a state agency. You wouldn't know it because they have lots of endowment and stuff or at least they did when I was there in '61 to '64. But that was a state agency so we punched in and we had a clock; punch in and punched out. That was a state job. My title was Program Administrator, I think. It was taking the statewide program including the Art Mobile. They sent exhibitions around but they also had these chapters and affiliates around the state of Virginia and the state art museum sent programs to these places out in the field and the places out in the field sent their members to the museum in Richmond where they'd have lunch and then see theatre and take their bus back so that was the kind of thing I did.

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?

Yes, I read novels and I did go to a reading. I was in Los Angeles and I went to one of those symphony space readings at the Getty Museum. So I'm in touch that way and I'm a volunteer at museum here in Vermont. I'm writing a memoir now about the early years at the Adirondack Museum and I've written three or four books and a number of articles. I'm not writing any articles now so I've kept my hand in. Mostly it's non-fiction writing.

E. Demographic information:

1. *Gender* - Male
2. *Age range now* - 70
3. *geographic region he or she lives now* – Mt. Tabor, Vermont
4. *political/partisan identification* – Democrat