

John Jowers

Executive Director of Virgin Islands from 1969 as associate director to 1985; 1985 to 2001 or 2002 was the executive director.

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?

As far as NEA was concerned, it was to make funds for the arts available and promote the arts. That's basically what it was all about.

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?

Because we were an island, we were very different than the mainland. Board members as well as myself, we would invite people to come down to actually have meetings over there and they would all say, "Oh, no, that's a vacation spot and people are just going to swim and they're going to do this and they're going to do that." So they would come down as individuals. So Wayne and a friend of his came down one time and they spent some time with us at my home and then we had Jonathan Katz and Ed Dickey; Frances Poteet, of course; and Lara Mulholland and all of them would come down as individuals to either work for a time and guess what? They didn't go to the beach everyday but people wouldn't come down because they thought it was too much of a playground or something of that nature. It wasn't a playground at all. There were a lot of things involved.

I was charged with the job of opening the offices. I did not necessarily have any huge ideas because it was the beginning of something that was very, very new. I was very curious and inquisitive to learn what the community needs were because we had such a mixture of people both ethnic, education....a whole host....religious backgrounds. We are a very, very small island because in St. Thomas we were only 15 miles long and three miles wide. I think it has increased by a few miles because they have added more land into the water but in 1969 the Virgin Islands consisted of three main populated islands: St. Thomas, the capital; St. Croix, the largest of the three with two towns; and St. John which two-thirds of it is national park. An office was set up in St. Croix and a board of directors consisting of nine members was involved with the council. Three local arts councils were set up on all three islands when the Virgin Island Council on the Arts commenced which was in 1966 actually with Stephen Bostic. I wasn't hired until '69,

three years later. When I was hired, I was charged with the business of opening the Virgin Island Council on the Arts office on St. Thomas and St. John. We didn't even have an office. My family home....my mother was very gracious to let me use one of her rooms, her telephone number and her box number for two years. People are still writing to P.O. Box 103 because that box belonged to my grandmother. That's a very, very low number. To make a long story short, it was very interesting but it took two years to find an office and we finally found a place. I don't know if that necessarily answers the entire question but it goes around that it was such an interesting time for people and there were many, many community based groups such as the Music Association, the Friends of Denmark because at one time the island was owned by Denmark, of course. We had Arts Alive. I think I was involved with ten organizations either in membership, on the board or ex-officio or what have you because of the things that we were hoping to do. My biggest job and my biggest goal and my biggest idea was to get into the community and see what the people really wanted. From there I joined everything I could possibly join to get a better idea and, thank god, we met people who were in dance, music and very, very dedicated human beings that were there but they didn't have any money, of course.

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?

Yes, definitely. The Virgin Islands Council on the Arts is still continuing to find and fund individuals and group organizations and, yes, I do believe that the big idea was done. It was achieved. *Did you change your mind about anything that was needed?* I think I'm going to repeat this over and over and over. One of the big things was, as far as changing my mind, I really didn't change my mind but the one thing that was always a situation was funding, of course, but I don't think that's necessarily my problem alone. It's a problem that all of us had.

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

The fact that I was able to work with young people in the community on all levels and at one point in time the National Endowment, of course, had a great program that they were able to assist young people to go on to different schools and colleges and further their education. Unfortunately that stopped but touching the lives of so many people and assisting them in all the areas of the arts was really what I enjoyed most of all. I would do lecture demonstrations at schools and different types of programs because of my background in textile arts, drama. I was very much involved with all of the arts; a contributing member as well as a person who had been involved myself with the arts.

E. What was most frustrating to you?

Again, I'll say funding and the fact that I still maintain that people were not....we had very, very strong support from governors. I worked under, believe it or not, seven governors and they were all very helpful except maybe for two and they were helpful, too, but not as strong supporters as some of the others. Basically, it was the money....funding, funding, funding....and even though you went to the legislature and you went to the different government agencies and you would also go to the Endowment. Actually I found a great deal of support from the Endowment. At that point in time when I was working, they had a lot of special programs and we had a lot of help from different

individuals. You could pick up the telephone and call the Endowment and you could get through to people. I don't know that it has changed. It has changed considerably by comparison to what it used to be but I would say funding was the most frustrating.

F. What was most surprising to you?

I really didn't find anything that was that surprising to me because I was working in a community....I worked with so many different segments of the community and I really didn't find anything more or less more surprising than others.

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

NEA/SAA's – The relationship with NEA was excellent. They allowed us to give at that point in time as I mentioned before individual grants. The program was extremely successful for so many years. I got to know so many of the people in the Endowment. The very first meeting that I went to I met an awful lot of people who were very, very much involved with NEA and, because I lived on an island and because it was different, I got to know a whole host of people from the different state arts agencies such as the Maryland state arts agency and many of the people, of course, were able to discuss things with me and in turn find out what was needed on the islands and how they could help. One of the people, of course, was Wayne. He was always very attentive and he was always like that and the other person was from Baltimore, Jim Backus. Jim came to the islands and there were so many other people who were there and their names I can't necessarily remember. Another person who was an excellent board member, I think, in the southwest was Louise Trague McKenney who has since passed but she was extremely helpful and I visited her place in New Mexico. I met a great number of people that were extremely willing and able to or wanted to travel to the islands and assist but our relationship with the National Endowment for the Arts was great as well with the other state arts agencies and the Southern Arts Federation as well as the Mid-Atlantic State Arts Foundation of which we became members later.

ACA – I remember John Hightower very, very well and we would have good conversations. It then turned into NASAA and, of course, Jonathan Katz was extremely helpful to us. We did several exhibitions in New York which, if course, he would attend. We did something in lower Manhattan in Soho in the 80's and Jonathan Katz was extremely supportive as well as all the other people that were involved but he was especially helpful and he would come down to St. Thomas and spend time and visit with me individually and as a working person as well so it was extremely helpful to us. I thought NASAA was one of the best things. I was on the NASAA board for a very short time.

LAA's – Local arts agencies were in the beginning stages. We had a local arts agency in St. Thomas which was extremely good. Of course, none of the members were paid so consequently it was very difficult to get sincere people that were working. There was one lady who was the backbone of the arts council and she was from New York, a Cromwell, and she was extremely supportive of the arts council in all areas. And there were several artists who were involved. There was the person who was involved with the school of dance; the person who was involved with the school of music. They were all extremely supportive. The St. Croix Arts Council, because we had two towns, it was difficult to get

people to really work together sometimes because you always have that separation. St. John was a very much smaller place and that had if not the best arts council and they were extremely supportive of the arts. We would have different programs and, of course, one of the biggest problems is with the islands you could not necessarily drive from island to island. You would have to go either by plane or what they called The Goose which is the amphibious plane and then, if not that, you would have to travel by ferry and it would take time to get from point a to point b then take a taxi from that point to another point and, god forbid, if it rained or if you had a hurricane month which, of course, we had our share of those, everything would stop. But by in large, coming back to the original question, the local arts councils were extremely supportive of VICA and we, in turn, were very supportive of them.

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 don't think the agencies on the mainland to a degree necessarily understood all of our needs because, as I said before, they made reference to the Island like it was a happy spot. It was like Hawaii; people dancing on the beach and stuff like that. I don't know that they were totally aware as to what was happening until people came down. What the mainland people were doing and I'm not being critical, I'm trying to get a point across because people on the mainland catered more to the grassroots people at that particular time when they came to the islands and we were having problems not alone with grassroots, low roots but we needed also help for the middle income people. I don't think some of the agencies understood that. I think because of people like Rhoda Tillett who was involved with the Arts Alive program for so many years and the fact that, when we invited and the Endowment had money to send people down, they would send Ed Dickey and they would send other people and I think finally it took an awful long time when they were able to come down and see the actual situation and travel and then they knew it was a problem distance-wise. Not a huge problem but you could not get into a car and say, "In 20 minutes, I will be over to see you, Sue, or in 30 minutes, I will be over to see somebody else by car." You had to spend the entire day doing a particular, one project because of distances and because of different situations that came about so it was a challenge from that. The states arts agency field....with government, of course. We had a situation where, because we were very, very new and because we were at the Endowment, the Endowment would send us "x" amount of dollars. We would hardly ever get a match from our local government and thank god we had people on the board that worked in the finance department and they could say, "If you don't match these funds, the Endowment is never going to give you another bit of money." The Endowment was extremely, extremely generous to us and they were very patient with us because of the fact that we were an island. As far as the regionals, of course, I never had any problems with the regionals. We went to South Carolina to visit the Southern Federation and then we went to the Mid-Atlantic and we chose the Mid-Atlantic because, of course, that was our region, believe it or not. The other states, you know, they were fine.

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?)

During my tenure, as I mentioned before, I worked with seven governors and five, actually six of them were extremely, extremely helpful to me. As a matter of fact, I received an award. The legislature because of the changing of the guard every two years and not continuity within the legislature, it was very difficult to find people that were constantly as helpful as they could have been. I found that the people who were not necessarily political but the people who were the private sector and the people who had schools there and the people who we had supported over a period of time would go to the legislature and talk in our behalf. We would have group meetings and then they would write letters to the governor. They would write petitions to the governors asking them for more assistance for the arts council so that in turn they could be receiving assistance. One hand washes the other, so to speak. So consequently from that point of view it was very good but, as I said, the governors were very, very good and one of them in particular I knew personally and he was extremely helpful to the arts. He invited us to the government house to do displays of works. Mrs. Evans at this particular time would invite young people up to do musicals on Sunday afternoons and she would serve tea to guests and things of this nature and incoming people from the states, she would have performances and we would set up different pieces of sculptures by local artists and young people, especially young people. Yes, we did receive help from government from that point of view. The legislature was questionable. Even though they gave us money, it was never enough but that's all our claim to fame.

J. How did you use your time:

1. Can you describe a prototypical day?

What I would do if for instance I had business in St. John, I would have to drive from home which I left home about 8 in the morning. Believe it or not, even though the island is very small, it would take 30 minutes to get to where you would pick up the boat; another 30 minutes to get to St. John and then another 30 minutes to go around the island to see the different things so we're talking about a couple of hours. A typical day would be spending it with an organization such as the St. John School for the Arts where you would meet with Mrs. Frank and you would sit there and discuss her program which was a very fine program in the area of dance and music and that was one part of it. The entire day was taken up not alone necessarily with the job work but with the travel back and forth which was a typical thing. In order to familiarize myself with some of the things that were needed, you had to spend an awful lot of time just talking and communicating with people and that was really a big, big part of my job. In addition to that, not working with the arts alone but I worked with mental health for quite some time as part of my job with the arts council because there were great needs and there were great needs for teachers and assisting people that had neuro-psychiatric problems so this, too, was a part. You almost need to study psychology when you're involved with the arts which I think most of us have had an opportunity to do. But a typical day for me was spending some time in the office which, of course, I had very, very good assistants; people that were working there like not necessarily secretaries but responsible individuals who could

handle the grant processes and I would go out into the field and do an awful lot of work at the schools, etc.

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

20%___ *Grant administration*

10%___ *advocacy/lobbying with public officials* all involved with the field and communications

___ *field /constituency communication*

30%___ *agency strategic planning* I did with my board; sometimes they were extremely helpful and sometimes they were noncommittal; over four meetings a year if that much if you could get all the board out; again one of the big problems was weather conditions; when you interviewed Frances, I don't know if she said anything about the islands; you had a problem; if it rained, the airport could close; if there was a hurricane couldn't travel by boat

30 to 40%___ *program development*

___ *fundraising* again with program development, it was sort of a hand in glove because with program development came fundraising; I went into the community and we had different advocacy groups that I would deal with over a period of time;

___ *partnership building (with other government agencies, with other types of nonprofits, with private sector, with arts/cultural agencies at other levels of government)*

10% for most of these except for grant administration and program development

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

Yes, definitely. I think I was very happy with all the progress that we had made. The council was on its feet. We had better funding. We had a better office to work out of. We first started at my mother's home with several telephones but one line, then we went from there into a place which was a hotel and did our office there and every time it rained, the rain came in. When I left we had done several island Caribbean types of art displays. We were involved with things that I had always wanted to do and that is to do to go throughout the Caribbean and do the work of the different artists so we would attend places like Trinidad/Tabago and Caruso. We would set up shows over there which, in the beginning, this is a first time because, when I came, there was no relationship between the islands because we are the American Virgins. Then we have the British Virgins. Then we have Aruba which is Dutch. Martinique, Quadalupe these are the French islands and, of course, one of the things that we never did or was never done in the islands, even though we had people from these different islands, we really didn't know the background or culture of what was going on there. When I came in, I remember people would say, "Oh, you're only going there for fun and games." This is one of the things I really wanted to do; that is to travel to the different islands and set up different types of shows so we did visual arts; we did drama arts; we did dance, music and a combined effort of all the arts. Then we had a visual arts show which was absolutely fantastic which traveled from the US Virgin Islands to Caruso to Aruba and then to Paris. We did an awful lot of things like that so the growth process....there were many, many noticeable changes that took place from when I started in the beginning and

the towards the end, there were many things. Not alone did we do things in the Caribbean, but we also did things in the US because we would do things in New York and I would meet with several people and we did an exhibition in Lower Manhattan which I mentioned before and it involved like 20 US Virgin Island artists. We would do a show in the BVI which is the British Virgin Islands so there were many, many different changes that took place and then we would do dance performances and would travel to all the other islands and one of the strongest arts in the US Virgin Islands and I think it still is music and dance. Drama is beginning to blossom more but the dance arts are very, very important and because of that many, many of the young students continue on with their dance and travel like we've had the Dance Theatre of Harlem, of course, come down and we have many young people; as a matter of fact we have now a professional dancer from the Dance Theatre of Harlem originally from St. Thomas. She has now quit because she had a very bad accident and she is now an attorney. I saw a lot of very, very fantastic things happen; many, many changes happen in the area of the arts that were most pleasing for me.

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 have question marks on that one because there are so many things we can discuss. I think one of the things is people should be interested...and I'm not answering the question...but people should be interested in the promotion of the arts. People should be interested in stories that are positive stories about what is taking place in their community. It's a little bit different than in the island. It really isn't different because we're all in the same the business of the arts but what they ought to know about my agency is that it was a very small agency that blossomed into something that was very good and it continues to be like that because of the growth period and because we were able to join regional arts agencies. We have been better affiliated with what is happening on the mainland and because we have many people who are dedicated people with the arts who have come down to the islands to see what is taking place and have encouraged a great deal of people. I think basically the story is that we have grown tremendously and people ought to know that they need to be in constant contact with their community but also in constant contact with the agencies that are funding.

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

I'm still in contact the with arts council, not as much as I used to be because I'm traveling a great deal right now, not necessarily for pleasure alone but for health purposes. I do restoration work for the government. I have either done it on my own because that's one of the things that I do or I go to New York and I have people at the Metropolitan and at Christie's and at Sotheby's for appraisal purposes. I do work with the Mary Cassat Foundation and the Pissaro Foundation because they are doing a special book so I am really involved with the Wildestine Institute in Paris and I've been doing a lot of work with that. As a matter of fact, I'm still waiting on the complete works of Pissaro and that should be out. I have a very dear friend in France that I work with, Alexis, and she's keeping me in contact with the Wildestine Institute and then, of course, Mr. Wildestine visited St. Thomas. He has a place, Frances Bay, which is an island off of St. Thomas or

pretty close to the British islands. As far as keeping in contact, yes, I have, I do and I'm in touch with the young lady who's executive director now, Betty Mahoney, and we're involved with the Chamber of Commerce. I'm involved very heavily with them and I'm always been involved with the arts whether I'm working with it directly or indirectly.

A. If so,

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

Number one is, of course, there's a shift of administration and I feel that things have improved tremendously. Not improved from the standpoint necessarily of having better people working there but having more funding. They have the most gorgeous office that you have ever seen. I worked with a little tin desk when I first got there because we were at the beginning stages and there was no money for the fancy things, so to speak, but now it's really great what has happened.

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

Number one is the person has to be an excellent communicator if at all possible. They have to be able to go into the community and really see what is happening. I've seen many, many people go to a low income area and really frown on some of the things they've seen. It's very difficult. People must learn to adjust. As a person going into the business, they need to learn to adjust, to be as good of a communicator as they possibly can with every segment of the community but they must also live their own life. In my case I made the mistake of using on a card my home number as well. I would get calls all hours of night and day. Of course, the community is small enough, I didn't really basically mind but on some occasions it became very trying. I then, of course, I made the mistake....I didn't make a mistake....I became involved with many, many arts related groups and I found myself getting very, very stressed out. But I think people need to be good communicators and they need to really know the community and they really need to go into the community. I know in working in St. Croix especially for me, St. Croix was very foreign, so to speak, because I was born in Puerto Rico. We moved to St. Thomas and I was familiar with St. Thomas and St. John so, when I would go to St. Croix, they had a huge office with like about five rooms and our offices consisted of one room so everybody would come in and they felt very, very accustomed to just come in and say, "Hey, John, how are you?" and sitting around and chatting whereas when I went to St. Croix, it was more of a reserved type feeling so what I did was I put my office outside so that I could have eye contact with everyone. I think this is very important.

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

I think it would be fine to do that. It would be great. I don't know that I would at this particular age and stage in my life. You know, I'm not interested in doing some but if it were the beginning, I would like to move in with a little bit more comforts than what I started with because I found myself to be very....it was a very tiring procedure but, of course, I was 40 years younger, too. That's a whole different thing.

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

Oh, yes. I think all of them have lived up to their promise. I think from what I have seen with the regional arts councils, I think the states arts agencies have grown tremendously. I think the National Endowment for the Arts; I don't know what the funding procedures are now because I'm not that familiar with it and I really am doing other things in my life, but I think as far as we are concerned with our state arts agency, they have grown tremendously. I think that their boards are much...they have better facilities; they have better communications. When we first started out, we didn't have a computer; we didn't have cell phones. I think we had a broken down fax that you could only put a piece of paper through it; you couldn't even lift the top of it up. Our telephone system was lousy. The power would go off all the time. I mean all of this has improved tremendously and, because of that, the growth has gone sky high and I think that's true of not us alone but all of the arts agencies.

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

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?

If I had to do it over again, I would probably not get as involved with so many outside elements. Basically when I first started to work there for the first five years, I really was the only person that was working and I would never do that again. I would try to hire somebody but, of course, we couldn't hire anybody because we didn't have the money. But I wouldn't get as much involved as I did but then again, if I didn't get involved, I wouldn't have reaped the benefits that I did after I left. Basically that is it.

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

As I said, they must be good communicators and they really need to adjust to a whole lot of different situations especially... I don't know how it is in the states. I went to school in Iowa. Because I was in school in Iowa, I was in a Dutch community so basically that was it. When you go to the Virgin Islands, you have East Indians, you have people from the mainland; you have very, very, very wealthy people and you have very poor people; you have a very small middle class and this is why I say they must be extremely capable of handling themselves. They must be able to adjust. They must be able to meet and greet with different types of people and have a very, very open mind. I'm accustomed to be with all kinds of people and people can be very ugly on occasions and I think that some of the people I met with different arts council as well as regions, they are so much more capable because they have knowledge and they the knowledge of travel and I think this is very, very important for people that they have this knowledge because they are able to work with different ethnic backgrounds; different religious backgrounds. I mean everybody can go out and work with different ethnic backgrounds and different religious backgrounds but I think travel does help a great deal.

V. Information about you:

A. Education – Highland, Las Vegas, New Mexico

1. *Educational level (has, ba, some grad, ma, PhD) - MA*
2. *Major/field - Art History and Ceramics and Textiles*

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)

The skills I have are in art, visual arts. Starting with the beginning actually it was in dance because I studied dance with Margaret Caron. She is the mother of Lesley and Lesley used to come down to the islands because they had a shop there. Mrs. Caron danced in 1935 on Broadway and she taught and I studied with her for approximately three years. That was one so I'm very familiar with dance and because of that I think not for myself alone but for the very, very strong dance programs that they had at the islands, my daughter now has her own company in New York. She's doing very well, too. At any rate I brought dance and I studied, of course, art history; textile design; ceramics. I have a minor in dramatic arts. I had fashion design in San Francisco and I had several courses towards a doctorate degree but I never continued so I just got basically courses I took. I have a very, very strong business in textile design because I did an awful lot of things. I have had one man shows in New Mexico, in Corallis, and the Young American Craftsmen of New York, I had a showing which I did. Two of my pieces toured many, many years ago so I came to the council with skills in dance, visual arts, dramatic arts, art history, fashion design, ceramics.

C. Work Experience

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

I worked at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico with the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and I taught dramatic arts. I was one of the younger teachers there. At that particular time I was 26 and I had students who were 18 to 20. I was hired by Lloyd Newkiever who's a very well respected designer and he's just passed. The other experience I've had as far as working was concerned, I used to teach at the high school level at West Mesa. I also taught special needs children in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I taught at the University of New Mexico in textile design and I taught at the College of the Virgin Islands which I taught a class in art history. In the army I was one of 150 people that came to base Sandyer Base in New Mexico and what I did was I worked as a specialist instructor with the Red Cross for Special Services and then I was the moulage artist at Sandyer Base in New Mexico for disaster make up. I did all of the moulages. Moulage is a disaster program. If someone's head is blown off, you have to make a design of the brain and then pour plaster. Actually you're molding like broken arms and molding like...I hate to say it but if someone's intestines are blown out, you have to make moulages of it or copies of it so that you can do disaster make ups so I did that for years when I worked with the army because I had a background in sculpting things. Then I worked at Jackson Furniture Company in Oakland, California, as an assistant buyer for furniture and a full-fledged buyer in the toy department as far as merchandising is concerned. I worked also with Rhodes. Right before I went to the Virgin Islands, I was teaching at the Institute of American Indian Arts. I was teaching at the Institute and then at West Mesa but basically the Institute with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

2. *Did you work for a SAA either before or after your time as Executive Director?*
3. *Did you work for a public sector agency – not an SAA – either before or after your time as Executive Director?*
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, I do. As a matter of fact, I'm doing some batik work now and some different types of textiles because textiles is really my favorite. I had great looms but the hurricanes took them. We lost the house in 1995. We lost everything. We're still working on things.

E. Demographic information:

1. *Gender* - Male
2. *Age range now* - 70
3. *geographic region he or she lives now* - St. Thomas, Virgin Islands
4. *political/partisan identification* - I don't want to get into that; the funny thing is in the Virgin Islands you cannot vote for a President; we can't even take part in it; we have our own problems

I really enjoyed my time working with the VI Council on the Arts. I enjoyed meeting people. I really miss it to be very honest with you. I am still very active in the arts. I want to continue to be active. Right now I still get calls from people to come and do work and I give them appraisals and things which I do as well. I give some appraisals. But there are many things that I feel that I cannot do so what I do is I send it to my friends, the restoration people in New York because I've gotten to know them over a period of time actually since 1980 and I started with restoration projects so I'm still doing that which I think is very, very important.

I was upset with one of the people that was in there and that is that lady...I can't even remember her name maybe because I don't want to remember her name. She was the head of the NEA. *Jane Alexander?* Yes, Jane Alexander. I was upset with her because everybody plans to visit the islands or they plan to do things and then she said she wasn't going to visit the islands and then I had a call from the guy that used to work with her whom you may or may not know. He worked with her; he was sort of her liaison to make arrangements for her travel and on and on. Anyway, he said to me, "First of all I want you to know that Jane Alexander will not drive in a foreign-made car. That's number one. Number two is I would suggest to you that you must, in fact, school yourself in the proper manner in which to meet Jane Alexander." You know, I told him, "You know something? We hosted Maestro Maurice Abravenal and his wife." And I said, "Since I don't speak Spanish as well as my wife does, my wife and Mr. Abravenal's wife were able to discuss all the problems all the problems they had in Argentina as well as Utah as well as every other place because my wife speaks perfect Spanish," because she is Spanish. I was so annoyed so she never came to St. Thomas. And I'm saying the only kind of car that I have is a foreign-made car because we can't so cleverly drive around in these huge American made cars because the island is too small and the roads are too small. So that was one of the things. And then, of course, I met Mr. Biddle who I thought was an absolute dream, funny as a devil, and his wife Katrina. I mean she was a pill. But those were funny things that I think that happened. And then the great, great big, big man, Frank Hodsoll. He was a huge man; very, very accommodating; very, very nice to everyone. And then, of course, the very first lady that we met that the place is named for, Nancy Hanks. I thought she was a charming, charming lady. That's the same time that I met that lady from New Mexico who was on the board, Louise Trague McKenney because she was a very good friend of hers. I called the Endowment one time and the people that I knew are no longer there. It's really amazing. Now the VI arts council has gone gangbusters because they have the most gorgeous office. I mean the ceilings are like 12 foot high ceilings. It's a brand new building. It's right across the street from Fort Christian in downtown St. Thomas and the executive office is like huge. They have like a dining table for a desk. When I first started, we had like a little broken down tin desk with one telephone but it's really amazing. I'm really happy for them.