

John K. Urice

Executive Director of Florida from Sept 76 to June 78; started March of 1976 as program coordinator and had responsibility for all the arts in education programs, grants programs

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?

Back then I saw that the big idea was idealistic but achievable—to use government funds to expand the availability *and quality* of the arts. From my first day at the Fine Arts Council I chafed a little at the paternalistic attitude of the Endowment, something I'm sure you were familiar with. I think the bigger concept was an idealized "Rooseveltian" or New Deal vision of what government can or should do.

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?

The agency was founded in 1969. We got our first appropriation in FY70; I think it was \$5000. Between 1969 and when I became director in 1975, there had been, I believe, *six* directors, averaging less than ten months of tenure. My first idea was to *survive* for more than ten months to break the record!

I think I had about three major issues. Obviously, the first was to increase funding. The second was to rationalize our administrative processes. Third was to improve access to state funding for organizations that were systematically excluded. Florida was growing at the rate of—I can't remember if it was 800 people a week or a day, probably the former. The population center was shifting south and the state had no idea how to handle

this kind of growth in matters like road construction, ecological issues such as the availability of water, much less art and culture. From the day I walked into the capitol to many years later, I often felt the state was barely one step ahead of where it should have been and oftentimes was two or three steps *behind* in almost every respect. The state was dynamic, the government was not. The Council's first-year appropriation was \$5000 and the number of arts organizations was growing very, very rapidly; many were intentionally being excluded from access to the council's grant-making and the administrative processes. One of my strengths was organization and administration. When I got there, first as Program Director, things were just unbelievably disorganized. You couldn't go to anybody and ask, "How much did we give this organization last year?" They'd look it up on a legal pad or try to find a 3 X 5 card. It was very much a fly-by-the-seat of your pants operation, and I wanted to improve it. In government, an agency must at least look and seem to be organized or you can't create the image necessary to build a strong constituency.

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?

Absolutely we made progress. We were the first state ever to use a computer for grants management. The program was called "Mother." It received a lot of national attention back then. Naively, I thought that what we were doing had already been done in every other state, it but when I went to my first NASAA meeting and I told people about what we were doing, they said "Whoa." So I brought a modem the next time, a very primitive modem by today's standards, and showed them that wherever I was I could access our data and find out how much money had gone to one organization or how many organizations had applied for how much. When we developed that computer program—which was surprisingly easy on a mainframe at Florida State University—we brought tremendous attention, self-confidence, and administrative maturity to the Council offices. We had a huge budget jump my last year—of course at the time I didn't know it was going to be my last year. Staff and advocates worked very closely with the legislature, and the appropriation grew from \$551,000 to \$1.6 million in one year. Feeling confident of our future, we began a small, seemingly innocuous, activity. (By the way, when I say

“we” I am referring to all the members of the council’s staff.) I had no thought that our project would threaten my tenure at the council. We commissioned a translator and I had the staff publish our “Guide to Programs” in Spanish. In that setting it seemed pretty logical, but I almost lost my job over it because there were some in positions of power, both appointed and elected, who did not want the money other than to traditional symphonies, established museums, resident theatres, etc.

Did you change your mind about anything that was needed? No, not really.

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

First was organizing the state’s first “arts day” and the lobbying effort that led to the budget increase. Second was printing the “Guide to Programs” for Hispanics—we were, after all, the first state to do that, even ahead of Texas, California, and other states with large Hispanic populations. Third was the introduction of technology and new processes into the office.

E. What was most frustrating to you?

The administrative structure and the politics drove me crazy. The Fine Arts Council of Florida’s staff was part of what was called the Division of Cultural Affairs. The division also oversaw some cultural venues around the state and they were between us and the Secretary of State. Sadly, arts and culture were not under the governor; we were under the Secretary of State. I’m going to be very direct here and you can quote me. I don’t care; I’ll stand by it: We had a village idiot of a Secretary of State. His name was Bruce Smathers and he was the son of George Smathers, who had been an historic U.S. senator. In contrast, Bruce couldn’t have found his ass with either hand. He was just awful, but he had the right to appoint the director of the Division of Cultural Affairs to whom I directly reported. This guy, the division director, had been fired from two or three jobs and it was a political appointment to make sure he had some job. His first name was Tom, I think, but I didn’t keep a diary back then. He infused politics into *everything*. Sometimes he would walk into our offices and pretend he knew something about what we were doing. He didn’t. We basically listened to him politely and then ignored him. The

administrative structure was awful and very demeaning to those of us who had the professional training to do the job.

The environment was highly politicized. I can give you an example: I'd been director for awhile and we had some vacancies coming up on the council. I got word to put together a list of recommendations for the Secretary of State. I saw him very infrequently, which was not a problem! So my staff and I put together the list; we spent a lot of time and we tried to be diverse geographically, racially, by arts discipline or patronage interest—all the variables including political districts. I think there were three vacancies coming up over the next year and I believe we put forth 12 or 15 names.

About two days later, his fist shaking, this list in his hand, and his face beet red, the Secretary of State walked in and said, "What the f--- is this?" I explained how we developed the list and what we had considered, and so on and so forth. Finally, he said, "I don't want these names. I want the names of people who can get me elected governor." I had survived Vietnam, and I figured nothing that happened here could be any worse. Also, I was a pretty gutsy or stupid guy back then—so I told him, "I don't have any expertise in discerning that." He never asked us again for any nominations. In general, I tried to act as sort of the shock absorber between the arts community and the politics. I felt it was my role to keep the Secretary of State and the Director of the Division of Cultural Affairs out of the arts as much as I could. I was pretty successful at it but, ultimately as I said, I was fired. Let me rephrase it.

The second annual Governor's Awards for the Arts, which we organized of course, were hugely successful. Because of the protocol and the politics, the only people "up front" were the Governor, the Secretary of State and the Director of the Division of Cultural Affairs. As the program started to wind down, my staff and I were standing at the back of the room. At the end of the ceremony, the division director wandered by and I thought, "I've got to be honest with him; he is my boss." So I casually mentioned, "I want you to know that I'm looking at a couple of new opportunities for myself in higher education." He kind of looked at me and said, "I think that's very wise and I'd try and get those

locked in within the next 30 days if I were you.” I could read the handwriting on the wall. I had done my job: I helped the arts but alienated the politicians. I left proudly.

F. What was most surprising to you?

How much fun I had. When I was not dealing with the politics, I really loved what I was doing. When I wasn't dealing with the politics, I was working with one of the most competent, energetic and selfless staffs you could imagine. When it came time to do mass mailings, for example, we didn't stand on rank or ceremony. We all were around the same conference table collating and working very much as a team. When I wasn't working with staff, I was on the road. It was just fascinating because I knew very little about the range of arts endeavors going on in the state or the range of organizations. It was very flattering to have my ego brushed occasionally. I had a lot of fun during the time I was at the agency, a lot of fun. As they say, about 90% of every job is the equivalent of washing windows and I washed my share of windows. But I also got my share of ego gratification and pleasure.

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

NEA – I alluded to that relationship earlier. I have to bifurcate it in this sense: when dealing with the Office of State Programs—as it was then called and later became Office of Partnership—they really understood that most of us were new at this, and they seemed eager to help us be successful. When we dealt with the discipline-based program areas, however, we almost always felt as if we were being patronized. I remember one incident when I was still program director. During the summer of my first year I went to the American Dance Festival down at Duke in North Carolina; I was Dance Touring Coordinator. All the coordinators had a meeting with the people from Endowment who ran the Dance Touring Program. We were sitting outside on a grassy slope and it was a lovely afternoon. The woman from the Endowment said, “We're having a lot of problems with this program because you in the states keep changing jobs. We never know who we're going to deal with from one day to the next. We're going to cut funding for any state that doesn't have a director in place for at least two years,” or something

idiotic like that. Every one of the state coordinators just kind of look at each other and finally, being the big mouth that I am, I said, “I think that’s perfectly appropriate. Now, if the Endowment will make same pledge about its staff in all areas, we can talk about it.” They never brought that up again.

I love being a devil’s advocate and a smart ass; that’s why I became a professor. I’m in a good place. Back to the Endowment: One thing that I know made state agency directors laugh was a woman in—they didn’t call it Affirmative Action, it was the Office of Diversity or Special Projects, I think. Her first name was Lani. She’d call—and I’m exaggerating only slightly here—and with this lovely lilt to her voice say, “Oh, John, I’ve had an inquiry. Can you tell me how many one-legged Lithuanian dancers were supported by your grants last year?” And I’d say, “Oh, yeah, just hang on a second. I’ll look that up,” and whistle for about two minutes. Then I’d pick up the receiver and say, “That would be 16.” “Okay, thank you.” I mean they would ask the stupidest questions thinking we had this database of utter minutiae. We just made up the numbers. Whatever they wanted to hear was fine with us.

SAA’s – Relations were very good in the south particularly because we were ten or eleven states in the Southern Arts Federation. We met frequently and the directors were very collegial. When we ran into problems, the first thing we would do is call each other and say, “What have you done in your state?” At least in that group where I had the closest interaction, I felt that I was not with competitors, just great colleagues.

ACA – I’m not sure when NASAA was founded but I never talked with ACA that I can recall. It was American Councils for the Arts. I don’t recall what our relationship would be or was. I think NASAA was formed while I was director or just prior and at that point I just don’t remember now what our interactions were, if any.

LAA’s - I was very close to the ones in our state and the other staff were, also, because we were trying to nurture them and help them leverage local funding.

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 think the sweeping issue was legitimizing ourselves. Most of the state agencies were created, as you know, after the founding of the Endowment. The Endowment was created only in a maelstrom of conflict and some people were still trying to get it shot down even after it was created by controlling its budget. So I really think the issue was establishing legitimacy at the state level, regional level or even the national level. Remember that the enabling legislation that created the Endowment required specific block grants and other grants be given to the state arts agencies, indeed, even seed money to create themselves. Politically that was one of the smartest moves Biddle and all who drafted the legislation made, because in a matter of five or six years you had a 50 state constituency and we were still dependent though on those federal block grants, since we had such small budgets from the states in most cases. Politically how do you take a new organization like the Endowment and make it appear legitimate at least? Well, you have people needing it in every state of the union, and I think that was a politically brilliant stroke by Biddle, et al.

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 the anecdote would be the one I already shared with you about “the people who can get me elected” story. The arts agency was seen as a patronage agency under the leadership of the former Secretary of State. There was the same theme of political intervention and politicizing our grants because all grants had to be approved by him. The advisory panels met and the staff would make recommendations and the council would vote but they then went right up the ladder to the Division of Cultural Affairs and then to the Secretary of State who had to approve every one of them. I think I’ve really covered the state political climate. In terms of an ally it really wasn’t a particular politician.

The chair of the council during my tenure was a man named Bill Chandler; I suspect he's long dead. He was an attorney from the central part of state who wore white patent leather shoes and belts and talked with the most hideous southern drawl you could imagine. Yet, when you were alone with him, you realized he was an extremely erudite man. The accent was just one big put on, or at least most of it was; when I visited his home I found two baby grand pianos in a loft and an original Picasso and others on his walls. He was really a person who was much more sophisticated than he wanted to let on. Because he could play both sides of the street—the “aw, shucks, I'm a country boy” and “I'm a sophisticated consumer of the arts,” he was able to build relationships with legislators that were much stronger than any the staff could have built.

Besides, and I don't know how true this is in other states, when the legislature was in session, as an employee of a state agency you could not enter the capital building on either side where each of the houses met. You could go in for administrative purposes, but you could not go in without a written note, like a hall pass, from a legislator saying, “Let John Urice in the building. He's coming at my request to meet with me.” We were not allowed to go into the legislature when it was in session to do the kind of lobbying they feared and generally, frankly, they dispersed very quickly when they weren't in session. I would meet with local legislators; indeed, we always invited them as I'm sure every state does, to be present for grants awards in their districts. But at the staff level very little cultivation was done except the obvious and superficial kind. It was done more by the Council members.

J. How did you use your time:

1. Can you describe a prototypical day?

No. I saw that question and I laughed my tail off. There was no typical day. One day I might be, as I said, standing around a conference table collating papers with my staff to get a mass mailing out. Another day I might be at a ceremonial function in the capitol. I might be traveling. I spent a lot of my time on the road so there was never anything typical for me. Every day I would go to work with a plan and usually that was shot to hell by 8:15.

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

It was a very interesting question because it really made me think back. What I roughly put down was

20%___ *Grant administration*

10%___ *advocacy/lobbying with public officials* in so far as I was talking about local legislators in their home districts and so on; that may be a little high

40%___ *field /constituency communication* Please remember when you're talking about Florida that the distance from Key West to Pensacola is greater than from New York to Chicago and it was a humongously difficult task to show a presence in all of the state and to get from point A to point B. Disney World was opened when I was director of the council and the airport in Orlando was still called McCoy Field; the passenger terminal was an old Quonset hut. We had not built the infrastructure for travel that we now have in Florida then so getting around the state was very time consuming; often it meant just driving but I felt being "out there" was really important because I didn't want the agency to be perceived as "those bureaucrats up in Tallahassee."

15%___ *agency strategic planning*

15%___ *program development*

0%___ *fundraising*

0%___ *partnership building (with other government agencies, with other types of nonprofits, with private sector, with arts/cultural agencies at other levels of government)*

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

I think that's a very good question also. I know in my early days a lot more time was "in house," in the office getting things organized and I don't mean just for the short term. We were establishing the computer program, and our processes. We didn't have anything written down when I got there as to how we did things, and it was all kept in the institutional memories of individuals. So I did spend a lot of time the first six or seven months just trying to make things work at home so I could feel safe leaving the office. I

had a really great deputy; he was more creative and artistic than he was administrative. As things got more organized and the staff could take over more of the functions and understood how to do things better, I could then travel.

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?

Obviously I've got lots of fun stories from that period, many of which might be humorous in the future, but I don't think they are representative. One of my favorites was there had been an incident of someone claiming to be an employee of the state and there was some crime associated with it—some sort of sexual thing—I can't remember the details. I do know the fallout from that event was that one day I was asked to report to an office to have my picture taken, as was my associate director. They took our pictures and about a week later we got these leather cases, just like you see in the movies where the FBI flips them open with a top and bottom part with a badge or insert. On the top part was my picture on an identification card; you know, "state employee" and under occupation it said "arts administrator." We had this comical image of going up to a box office in a theatre and flashing this and demanding free admission or something. It made no sense.

What I guess I would say in terms of things we should remember is back then our world was delightfully unrestricted. Despite the problems I mentioned earlier about politics, we had so much freedom, and I know it wasn't just in our state. We were innovating every day; we were asking ourselves, "will this work?" We responded, of course, to the Endowment, but we also took our own initiatives, and that's what I mean, in part, about it being fun. It was all very informal at that point. My god, with budgets of \$10,000 and \$15,000, nobody paid any attention to us; it wasn't worth it. As budgets grew, however, the pressure to make things more formal, to make things more bureaucratic, grew and evolved into what we have now.

I can also tell you a story about my associate director, Jim Mengel, and why state agencies in many cases succeeded. We had a nascent video/film program and we were

uneasy about how to fund it. It was a pilot program. I should point out here, when the Council was trying to choose a director; it was literally a split between Jim and me. I honestly think from what I was told later that my external presence was stronger than Jim's, not necessarily my competency, and so I got the job. Jim, instead of showing bitterness—he may have felt bitterness—remained the consummate professional. One day he came in and he had a proposal to fund the making of a small movie called “Gal Young ‘Un” based on a story by Marjorie Kennin Rawlings. Jim had such confidence in the filmmaker that he really pressed it, but I turned him down. Being who he was, Jim kept coming back at me and so I met with filmmaker, Victor Nunez, and I saw why Jim was impressed. I suggested we fund at \$6000 and they said, “No, it's ten thousand or nothing.” Ultimately I yielded and I never really knew what happened to this man's career after that or to his filmmaking or whether he was making pizzas, I didn't know. About six, seven years ago, a movie came out, a feature film with some good names in it called “Ulee's Gold.” He was the director; it was his film. Obviously he stayed in filmmaking all these 30 years and our grant was what started him off; it was his first substantive film. That felt good. We knew we had had an impact on somebody's career and the arts.

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

Intimately. A significant portion of my research and scholarship has been about state agencies. I've probably got, I don't know, 15 or 18 articles published on them; two more coming out this next 18 months. I work with NASAA very closely; they're wonderful in helping me with my research. The two articles I've got coming out is one on the history of research about the state arts agencies. You might find interesting because I was able to identify a lot of stuff from the '60's and '70's where there were token efforts to define “What is this new creature called the state arts agency and what does it mean?” And the second one is a study that I did that took a little over a year—some of the numbers are still being run. What we did, my co-researcher and I, was take a look at the state agencies that had suffered significant budget reductions in recent years and we studied the managerial perception of how those were implemented and the effects on the agencies

and programming. I just presented that at a conference in Hawaii and I think that will be out by late fall, early winter. So, yes, I've stayed intimately close, but I don't have any regular contact with Illinois Arts Council or anything like that. It's as a scholar, researcher, not as a functionary.

A. *If so,*

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

I think pretty obviously they've become highly bureaucratized and structured. I think we all perceived ourselves in the '70's as being arts agencies that happen to be in government—that little foundations vested within the government. I think now the states arts agencies are perceived as state government agencies which incidentally have to be involved with the arts. I think that's been turned on its head, quite predictably. I mean anybody who has done any research on organizational behavior or organizational development knows we move from very informal organizations into what are called mature organizations. With this comes increased accountability, bureaucratization, and pressure to use "efficiencies" that might have worked in the Department of Transportation. I don't think it's good but I think it was 100 percent predictable.

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

They don't have to know diddly-squat about the arts in terms of leadership. They just need to be articulate and at least fake knowledge of the arts, or an interest in supporting the arts. They need to be competent at working the political game. In terms of staff, I don't think much has changed over the last 30 years. You need at the program level people who are still naïve enough to believe that they can do good through the arts, who desperately care about the arts, and can speak the language of their discipline fluently.

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

I don't know. Probably. I looked at that question and I thought, "Oh, my god. I don't know. They've probably become something I wouldn't want to be associated with."

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

No, I really don't think so. My views on public art support both at the state and federal level have come around 180 degrees. I think probably the worst thing that's happened to art and culture in the United States was the creation of the National Endowment for the Arts. I've said this for more than 20 years in a lot of my writings. The NEA created a myth that we were funding the arts like most European countries do, forgetting that they didn't usually use competitive grants. They had established state opera, state theatre, state dance companies and the state museum. I think the Arts Endowment has been a disaster because it's become a focal point since, well the start.

Michael Straight writes about the first year of the Endowment's existence, and some of the crises they faced over arts content. I think basically to believe in what the Endowment was intended to do, you had to believe there was no art and culture in the United States prior to '65. What has happened is we've confused quantity with quality; "access" became the buzzword, not quality. We measure our successes on how many, not how good. I think the Endowment and its progeny were counterproductive to the cultural development and the natural evolution of culture and art in this country. I've taken some heat for that perspective from a lot of my colleagues, but I think if you look at the documentation, it's pretty clear how vulnerable both the federal agency and the state agencies are. I mean look what's happened to the funding of the Endowment since Reagan. Just during his administration alone, it lost 40% of its budget. Now we're at a \$100 million. When you adjust that to the peak which I think was 1979 and the buying power of the dollar, we're down to about 30%, so I just think it's a target and not a functioning or useful agency.

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?

I just said it; the role of government and what it can and cannot do for the arts. Let me tell you an anecdote from my first week in the office down in Florida. By the way I want to refer you to two articles that you may or may not want to look at. They're things I've written so I don't want to sound egotistical. I have a book chapter in a book called "Cultural and Democracy" which came out about 10, 11 years ago. It's entitled "Rethinking the assumptions, reassessing the outcomes: Reflection on public art support." It basically talks a lot about my years as director and it's in this book called "Cultural and Democracy" which was edited by Andrew Buchwalter. My first day in the office as a program officer, there was this very soft-spoken man who had been very close to Leonard Pas, a recently ousted director. He sat down and we chatted a bit. His field was architecture and he said, "Have you seen this?" and I looked at it. Let me just try quickly to find what I wrote of the description of because I think it's relevant; I really do. Let me just read this to you. You can use what you want out of it, if anything.

One colleague whom I liked immediately was a man in the awkward position of having a job for which he was over-qualified. His limited responsibilities only highlighted the fact that he'd been hired by the former director based, it was rumored, not on his abilities which I found manifold, but on his friendship with the now former administrator.

Then I talk about how he came in to talk and showed me a political cartoon.

It showed a frail and aged Native American brave in the foreground. His sad face showed years of anxiety and strain. His back sagged with the weight of long years. His buckskins were tattered and patched, offering little warmth from the snowstorm that blew across the cartoon. The barren background and torn teepee seemed incapable of providing shelter. Near his feet a campfire smoldered, but there was no wood to be added. The caption which struck me profoundly was, "If

you think you're going to prosper by letting the government take care of you, just look at the American Indian."

At that point I didn't understand its meaning, how profound that was, but I certainly think I have now. I guess that's the best anecdote I can think of right now.

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

Have a second career plan in mind. I mean even with the number of people being hired under civil service, I have a lot of doubts about the viability of a lot of state arts councils over the long term. We seen six of them recommended for elimination in last three years. While it hasn't happened, California certainly took it on the chin, I think with a 90% budget reduction. I think it takes a different set of skills now. It's no longer innovative, energized, almost evangelical people who love the arts and want to contribute to them, but it now requires somebody who's more comfortable in bureaucratic structure.

V. Information about you:

SEE CV

A. Education

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

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 a doctorate in theatre with a specialization in management and arts administration. I'd also gotten a masters degree in theatre management from the University of Miami and those were certainly skills I used. Secondly, I had been an army officer for a number of years including a full year in Vietnam and I was known for my ability...it sounds so egotistical but I'm a good leader. I'm reasonably articulate and usually am able to get people to work effectively as a team. I know how to shift gears to the mode that's most

appropriate for the situation. I think the combat experience was certainly helpful as was the general concept of being trained to lead. I've had a variety of jobs some of which you won't find on my CV because they're not academic and they would work against me. I had been a social worker dealing in child abuse prior to going into the military. Before that I had been credit manager for a chain of retail stores that are now out of business, but that's not my fault. I think I brought a lot of interpersonal experience; how to deal with people in various stages of distress; and I think I was well suited for the job.

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?

Nope. I was within the last couple of weeks of my PhD. I was at a cocktail party with about 60 or so people and a physician friend of mine and I were chatting and he said, "What are you going to do after you're finished?" "I don't really know." This was the 70's and a lot of things were going on. He said, "Have you met Dr. Price and his wife Anna?" And I said, "No." We walked over and I met Anna Price and her husband. He was a very prominent cardiovascular surgeon and she was head of the state arts council. To be very honest with you, I didn't know what a state arts council was. So I was standing there and she and I started chatting because of the shared interest in the arts and she said, "Well, I have a vacancy. We're in the middle of a hiring freeze right now, but I have a vacancy. I'd like it if you'd come by and talk to me about it."

That's how I learned about the state arts agency movement and that's how I ultimately got hired. As I mentioned in this article in the Bushwalker book, on the first day I was officially on the payroll, I was sent to New Orleans. I knew this was going to come up and I thought it was kind of strange. I went to New Orleans for a week on NEA money. Three days were devoted to the Architecture Program and we walked around very historic places in New Orleans basically having an architectural tour of the French Quarter and other places. We spent the next three days out of New Orleans learning about Folk Art. This was a very wonderful first week. I'm thinking, "This is a job I'm

going to get paid for?” We had a hell of a lot of fun down there. There were 25, 30 of us state coordinators and it was good. I had no state agency experience. Didn’t know what they were until I first met Price and ultimately went to work for her two months later.

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

I think the Army is sort of a public agency. All of my subsequent employment has been in universities, state universities. I spent most of my academic career as a dean and my last administrative job was vice president and provost here which are all, of course, executive leadership positions. In 1998 I decided I had enough after twenty-some years and I got tired of being the one who had to tell people, “No, we don’t have money for that,” so I decided to come back and do what I love: teaching and writing. I don’t know if those really count, but I’ve not had any other jobs.

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 CV

D. Do you pursue any art form? Which?

I'm in a school of theatre. I hold rank as professor of theatre, but I am not on production or artistic side. I publish extensively. That's how we rationalize some of our salaries. We supposedly make contributions to society by the research and the publication that we do, and I think in many cases it's a very accurate and honest assessment.

E. Demographic information:

1. *Gender* - Male

2. *Age range now* - 58

3. *geographic region he or she lives now* - Bloomington, IL

4. *political/partisan identification* - a registered republican; a fiscal conservative and I'm very comfortable being labeled a conservation in fiscal matters, but I'm a social liberal. I'm never quite sure what I am; I'm rabid about the national deficit and the trade balance and so on. I'm tired of my Republican president spending my money like a drunken sailor. On the other hand I do support the idea of government supporting certain social programs or, more importantly, not interfering with people's lives. I think it's so ironic that conservatives have always epitomized keeping government out of our lives; yet when the issue is homosexuality or abortion or any one of a dozen others, they're more than willing to jump into your life and tell you what you can and cannot do; I've never understood that

There was one thing I didn't tell you that I think was interesting in terms of my career. At the same time I knew Anna was going to resign as director and there would be an opening in Florida, there was an opening in another state. I think it was Tennessee but I can't be sure. I applied and was interviewed there. The departing director had been the founding director and was kind of in the Wayne Lawson mode; he was the institution itself. He was so beloved, and just seen as one of those really great people in the arts. The idea of either taking that job, where I'd be following an almost god-like person, or taking Florida where nobody had survived more than about ten months. Even though the pay was about half, I thought Florida would be an easier job to do. And it turned out I

was right, because I remember that the person who did take the other job only lasted a couple of months because he wasn't the other director, if you know what I mean.

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