

## **Michael Warlum**

*Executive Director of Indiana, 1969-1972*

*Interviewer:* Maryo Ewell

*Date, location of interview:* 10/17/04, Madison, WI

*Michael Warlum current contact information:*

Dr. Michael Warlum

4412 50<sup>th</sup> St. SW

Seattle, WA 98116

206-935-8615

[warfrank@aol.com](mailto:warfrank@aol.com)

*What was the big idea behind the formation of the NEA, and then later State Arts Council?*

Well, first of all it wasn't something that just sprang out of nowhere in 1965. There had been several attempts as I recall to get legislation through and signed by the President to set up some kind of an Arts body at the national level. The person that managed to honcho it through and get it done was, of all people, Richard Nixon, and I remember being at an ACA conference (I don't know what that is called now, Arts for Americans or whatever), in Washington. It was at the Mayflower Hotel, and President Nixon and [unclear] actually came and gave a stirring talk to the Assembly. What the idea of the National Endowment was when it began was to do something like is done and has been done for centuries all over Europe, and get the government involved with the arts, and with funding the arts.

Now, my position in it and my feeling about it, and those of others that I knew, was that what we were going to do with the National Endowment for the Arts in existence, was actually move the people of America to a whole new place on the evolutionary scale. Where the arts would be for everyone, where everyone would participate, where everyone would have an understanding. We had big, we had a huge expectation of what was going to happen. (You know as sort of an aside I have been profoundly discouraged and ashamed and whatever you want to say ever since, especially the last few years, of the way the National Endowment has performed because it has fallen so short of what we all had planned for it (I shouldn't say "all" but the people I was in immediate contact with and I had had in mind that was going to happen.

*Why is that? What expectations has it failed to honor?*

It has not developed a national constituency. I think the basis of all of its problems is the fact that it did not do what it said it was going to do and serve the people. If the endowment had lived up to expectations, what would happen is that there would be no

chance of someone in Congress cutting the appropriations. Furthermore, the appropriation would be much higher than it is at this point, the Endowment would be known, and act as a national leader in arts for the people. That is what was supposed to happen and what should have happened.

*What do you mean by arts for the people?*

I mean people in all levels of their life and in all levels of society, that it should have been a multilevel educational program. I am not talking about schools, (although why not!) but I am talking about awareness, I am talking about participation, I am talking about some real effort at touring programs like the dance touring program that began in the....(let's see I was at Michigan at the time, it would have been the early 70's), and there was something happening in dance in this country because the National Endowment was sending major companies all over the United States. It was an absolute [*unclear*] and renaissance in dance, which had been smothered and choked and allowed to die. That kind of thing could have been happening in all fields of the arts. I am sorry I am being so negative right now.

*Isn't that what the NEA is doing now by sending Shakespeare around?*

I'll be honest with you Maryo, I don't have a clue what the National Endowment is doing now.

*[Summarizes the NEA's Shakespeare Tour initiative]*

Well, I have to say I think that is excellent [*Given what he says next, I am not sure that I understood "excellent" correctly, because clearly he doesn't think much of it.*]. It is one tiny facet of what I am talking about. I would have to know what they meant by "rural," and I would also have to say that at this point in time with what has happened to the arts in the United States, at this point in time to make that a priority initiative is pathetic. There is so much that needs to be done and has not been done. If they did this it is an absolute failure to understand what the world is like now, where anybody in any house in any community in this country can turn on the television set anytime they want to, can rent DVD's and videos that improve things like Lawrence Olivier, Shakespeare, etc., etc. That is an absurd use of funds in the present climate.

*Tell us a little bit why state arts agencies were formed, from your perspective. When you worked for Arts Development in Wisconsin, you saw arts commissions being founded nationwide. Why were state arts agencies formed - was it any more than just being a recipient for the money?*

No, it was not anymore than that.... In the Midwest at least, and I suspect in the West and in the South, that was why they were formed. Places like the state of New York had a thriving Sate Art Council at that time, it was what we looked at as the model, but most states had nothing. Indeed Senator Jacob Javits got this provision into the legislation that

money had to go to each state, and overnight state bodies were formed in order to receive that money. That is where the state arts council movement came from, and anybody that tells you different is lying.

*Why did you want to go to a State Arts Commission, why was that even attractive to you? Maybe you should say something about your background in Wisconsin.*

I received from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, what was the first doctorate in community arts management ever granted anywhere; I did that because I made up my own program. I was a student in adult education, curriculum, and instruction. I was interested in the arts and my major Professor allowed me, and I did it with his help, to design a program that would fit me to be an arts developer with an emphasis on community arts establishment. As I was finishing my doctorate I received a faculty appointment as assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin, working for Professor Robert Gard, on the largest grant that the National Endowment had made at that point. It was a three year grant, (these are marvelous stories here).

The minute the National Endowment came into being, Professor Gard being the magnificent opportunist, put together a proposal for a three year program for establishing techniques for experimenting with and reporting on techniques for developing the arts in five small communities in Wisconsin. It was a three year grant, which the National Endowment and the National Council granted not realizing that they had no business granting for over one year, because they had an annual appropriation. So here they were saddled with a three year grant program. I was hired as a coordinator for that program. So I had worked actively, and also because of that...Oh that first year I was in the program, it would have been 1966, the Professor and I went to Washington D.C. for an early meeting of the state arts council directors at the National Endowment in order to let them know that this project was going on. We had constant contact with the National Endowment because of the grant. I knew Roger Stevens, I dealt with Charles Mark who was one of the original people at the National Endowment who administered our grant at the beginning. Then Clark Mitze and Leonard Randolph thereafter who were administering it. I had considerable dealings with everyone, I mean this was no big deal that I had considerable dealings with everybody at the Endowment, because I think that there were about 25 of them at that time, it was marvelously informal. Now where was I, I have gotten myself lost...

*I just asked about your background in community arts prior to going Indiana.*

Okay so my job at the University of Wisconsin was to work with these five small communities in developing arts programs, so that is what I had been doing before this. Now had there been a job available I would have stayed in Wisconsin and probably finished my career there, or else finished myself which ever came first. There was not a job available at the end of the three year grant program, so I began looking for a job. The obvious place to look in those days was to the state arts councils, because they were about the only game in town, unless you wanted to go to an arts institution, which I also considered.

Again an aside, but it is an important one, I have a great problem with what has happened in American education where we are career pathing kids practically from elementary school. An example I always use as to why this is a “[unclear]”, is that when I started graduate school in adult education in 1962 the job that I ended up with in 1965 of course did not exist because the grant hadn’t been given. The job that I ended up with in 1969, which was Executive Director of the Indiana Arts Commission, was not even thought of at that time. So here I was going into a profession that actually didn’t exist a few years earlier when I began my graduate work. I looked to the State Art Councils for a possibility of professional work because I needed to work, and because it was a logical place to move. I had grand plans, I became Director of the Indiana Arts Commission at age 28 or 29, the only person approaching that age was John Hightower, I think he became Director of the New York Council at 29, I was approximately the same age. My plan was that I was going to be working for the National Endowment in Washington by the age of 35, and that by 40 I was going to be Chairman of the National Endowment for the International Council of the Arts. So, I had a clear and realistic career path! Anyway the State Arts Council position was a natural progression for me from what I had been doing.

*So what was your big idea when you took the job? What did you want to do in the arts, or government, or the state, how did you think about it?*

I thought about it in the terms that I mentioned earlier, where I looked at my purpose as to move mankind, and we said mankind in those days, to move human kind to a new place on the evolutionary scale. I actually said that in speeches that I gave, believe it or not. It was no less grand than that, that was the plan.

*So then what happened: Did you?*

I don’t know, I don’t know. You hit on something that is a hot button for me, and that is that I believe that someone needs to start, unless they have already done it and I don’t know it, but somebody needs to do some charting of what happens to individuals, to what changes take place in individual lives as a result of experiences that are provided to them and brought out of them. I would wager to say that there were many lives that were changed because of what I did, it would make me sleep better at night now, and go to my grave more peacefully if I had some realistic picture of what changes actually took place in people. That is not an answer to your question....

*No, it is really. So does anything come to mind where something like that might have been happening in Indiana as a result of your work?*

Well then we began there in 69...oh - I need to give you some background on that. I actually set up the state agency and publicized the state agency because when, as we were talking about with the National Endowment, getting the State Arts Councils formed in ‘65 and ‘66. The state of Indiana, the governor, appointed an Arts Council and the Arts Council hired an executive director and things went nowhere. It took people in the state

some time to begin a movement to reconstitute that Arts Council. They finally got a new council appointed, the state agreed to put \$25,000 a year into it, they got them to reinstate that.

*They had rescinded it?*

Yes, they had rescinded it. So they got them to reinstate that contribution, and then they began again with a new Executive Director in July of 1969. So I was starting the agency from scratch at that point. We had \$25,000 to pay for me and the secretary, we had free office space contributed by a man people ought to be talking to because he is still alive at about 83 and in excellent condition, Frank P. Thomas. Frank was the Chairman of the Board of Burger Chef, which was a hamburger chain in Indianapolis (he had just sold it to General Foods), and he was appointed Chairman of the Indiana State Arts Commission. Frank was one of the most generous and visionary people I have ever met, and he would be certainly well worth interviewing, and soon. (Now I don't have it with me here, I have his E-mail, we are still in touch so I have his E-mail at home. He and his wife live in Taos, New Mexico.)

*So you are still in touch with your original Chair.*

Oh sure.

*So going back to your big idea was to move mankind....*

-I am sorry I keep losing the thread.

*No, no, that is my job is to sort of remember the thread. We are fine. So just an example where you think somebody's life or lives might have been changed, even if you don't have proof, just a hunch.*

One of the things we did because we had so little money to work with was.....

*\$25,000 you said?*

We had \$25,000 from the state, and that was for our expenses. The National Endowment state contribution that year was \$36,000. So we had \$36,000 dollars to administer to all the arts needs of the state. So I did what I could to try to get more money. One thing was that the National Endowment was pioneering their Arts Through the Schools program, and they wanted 12 states..... they had done it in I think 3 or 4 or 5 states for one year, and they wanted 12 states to act as a pilot program for it, and I applied for and received that grant. We sent an artist into a school in Northern Indiana to act as artist in residence for the year. Then the next year we were able to expand that with more funding to three schools in the state. Now I am not, interestingly enough, talking about what happened to the children which I could do, but what happened to the artist that we used. This is a woman who is still around actually, but who early on decided that by gosh she was going

to make her living as an artist, so she was an incredible entrepreneur in this kind of thing. We used her as an artist in residence for at least two years in two different locations, it gave her I think it was \$10,000 salary, it gave her a wherewithal to continue and expand her art in that time, and certainly make a material difference in her career and in her progress and so on.

*Because she had time to work in her studio?*

Well she had a studio set up in the school and had full time to create without having to worry about selling or where the next meal was coming from, she was a single mother with 3 kids to deal with, so she would just pick up the children and move to this community.

*So did you just out of curiosity ever follow her career?*

Well you can if you want to, she is still there: it is Claudine Paluzzi (sp?), she lives in Indianapolis, she is pretty much, well lets see she is older than I am I think she is probably 70ish now, if you ever talk to her don't say that... She spent her entire career as a full time professional artist in Indianapolis.

*So you believe she would not have continued a career as.....*

No, I don't believe that, I think she would have somehow continued as a professional artist, I am saying that what we did was boost that along, and help her improve herself professionally and give her a wider audience and a wider influence. That is just one pale example.

*Before I turned on the tape recorder you talked about a lot of frustration working in Indiana and you left after only a couple of years.*

Three years, I accepted a three year ...

*What was the frustration all about? Because right now it is sounding like everything was great, you went there with big ideas, you were changing lives.*

Yes, all that was true. I guess the frustration was centered around the fact that I was the only one that seemed to know that.

*To know what?*

To know that I was changing lives, or that we were changing lives I should say. But there were really big ideas to be grappled with. The first reason for the frustration, and I think this is something whether they tell you it or not, this is something that I think was pretty much germane to the original directors of state Arts Councils, it was the loneliest job in the world. There was nobody that understood what I was doing, except perhaps my secretary Bobbi. There was no one to talk to about it, it was completely a separate entity

and there was nobody to either [unclear] or to swap ideas with, or to talk to. It was very, very difficult, that was part of it.

Another part of the frustration was that the ideas that I came imbued with about indigenous arts at the community level, principally funded through community arts councils, that was not the vision that the people on my arts commission (there were 15 commissioners appointed by the Governor), that was not the idea that most of them came in with. Their idea was we will bring “quality professional arts to the little people”, and not even the real little people, they wouldn’t have done anything about rural communities, I know that.

Where it becomes particularly frustrating is that I was so naive, I was like I said all of 28 or 29. It never occurred to me that they weren’t on the same wavelength that I was. We had people on the commission, I mentioned Frank Thomas, we had Bill Crisp who was Assistant Dean of the music school at Indiana University, we had a [unclear] professor from Indiana University whose name I don’t remember, we had Alice P. Nichols who was formerly head of the Art Department at Ball State who was by this time director of the galleries at Ball State, we Nancy Worland who was the wife of a local architect in Indianapolis, we had Mariam Nixon from Wabash Indiana who was married to the son of the Honeywell family so she was on there with some money, we had Josie Orr from Evansville Indiana who was the wife of a State Senator, we had an art teacher from Indianapolis whose name I don’t remember who died just recently who never came to meetings and finally was replaced, we had David Sursaf who was a banker from....

Tape 2

*You were listing the names of your commission.*

And there were a few others but my point in listing was that we didn’t have representatives of major art institutions, which were few and far between in Indiana, but we did have representatives of several colleges and Universities. I didn’t catch on to it at first, but after a couple of years I was doing some statistical reports showing how the money had been distributed and where it was distributed in the state. I decided to do a compilation by institution, and discovered while these people on the board were giving all sorts of lip service to serving all the people in the state, but what they were actually doing was funneling money to their institutions.

I was horrified, I was upset with myself for not discovering it early and not catching on to it earlier, but I was horrified at the percent of monies that were going to Indiana University, to Ball State, etc., and there didn’t happen to be a representative of Purdue on the council and Purdue had gotten nothing from the program. Now I can’t say that this was money that was used ineffectively because these were all for outreach programs, I mean it wasn’t anything like [unclear]budget. I was upset with the fact that what was going on in my board was a completely political exercise and not putting money directly into the hands of the people that were trying to make programs work. The third

frustration was that I had a story to tell that you probably won't hear from anybody else because they won't tell it. I think in talking to my colleagues at the time I think was fairly typical. The board's idea of what the arts should be, and how they should be administered, and how in fact the State Arts Council office should be operated tended to be widely different from mine.

*The board members' ideas?*

Yes. I would guess that now because the Art Councils are such a long term established part of the scene that the commissioners and council members sit in a much more advisory or honorary capacity than they did then. My board was incredibly hands on, to a point I remember one program dividing up grant monies and at the end of 8 hours [unclear] from [unclear] University announced that now having spent 8 hours of deliberation we had granted \$4,600 of funds. They were that hands on, there were enormous arguments about who should get what money and so on.

*Eight hours for forty-how-many?*

\$4,600 or maybe it was 5-1/2 hours for \$4,600. Anyway this being the case I had one board member in particular who actually wanted to be Executive Director, and certainly wanted to tell me how to do the job, and no matter what I was doing it wasn't enough. This was a big part of the frustration. It finally got to the point where I had no choice but to start defying her constant demands openly, and at that point she used her political contacts to fractionalize the board and got it to the point where my only choice was to resign because the board was so fractionalized that I was no longer able to be effective. I guess after saying all that I have to go back to saying that the major problem in the job was the incredible loneliness.

*Were there any surprises?*

Much of the problem with the board was that their concept of arts, was that they were something grand, to be viewed in tuxedos. We had one situation for instance where because we had so little money we were very careful about what we did with publications, and when I would do annual reports (.incidentally I have all of that stuff if it were ever to be wanted), you know, I would mimeograph an annual report and so on. Finally after three years, or say about the middle of the second year or before the third year was over, we decided it was time to do a more elaborate annual report. So by this time I had an assistant, and she put together a marvelous light-hearted annual report, it was set up like a dictionary and for each letter there was a word which went on to describe something the council was doing. We by this time had acquired a board member whose name was [unclear] Miller, and she was Mrs. Jay Irwin Miller of Columbus Indiana, Cummins Engine, and was a "grand lady of the arts." She was in Florida for the winter and so every month during the winter when I would bring the progress of the annual report to the board they would all approve it hands down and thought it was a great idea and what a nice plan. Mrs. Miller came flouncing back from Florida, took one

look at what we were doing and deemed that this was not appropriate, at which point the entire board simply caved and acted as though they had never approved it in the first place. It had been printed up by this time and was ready for distribution. I remember my assistant just imploring me to just send it out anyway, which I didn't do and I wish in retrospect, it wouldn't have shortened my job tenure in the least to have sent it out. Mrs. Miller grandly volunteered funds and staff from the Irwin Sweeney Miller Foundation to make up a new annual report that would be more appropriate, and so they came up with this glossy document, which had on the front cover of all things a primitive African sculpture, very "germane to Indiana" naturally....

*Did she design it?*

Oh her foundation did, her graphics people did. I was allowed to contribute photographs. So we ended up with this glossy piece that made it look as though the Commission had all sorts of funds, which of course we didn't have. It got very bad, it got very bad. I can't remember where I started....I am having a lot of trouble in this interview trying to remember where I started.

*Don't worry, that is my job. We were talking about frustrations and you said that you came back to the idea that the arts were grand, something to be done in tuxedos and then illustrated it with this story. So then I was wondering if there were any big surprises, or have you already pretty much covered that?*

[*The surprise was,*] My head was in such a different place from other people's...

*So lets go back to the NEA. So what was the Indiana Arts Commission's relationship to the NEA at that time and, talk also about ACA and other State Arts Agencies.*

Okay, keep me on track on that second part or I will forget about ACA if I don't. As I mentioned earlier the relationship with the NEA was an incredibly close one. First of all there weren't very many of them, them being people at the NEA, so we knew virtually everybody including the secretaries. I was in constant contact with Clark Mitze and Len Randolph who were the people who were responsible for the State Councils, and Joann Pearlstein, their secretary. It was a very close relationship. Roger Stevens left and went to the Kennedy Center and Nancy Hanks took over, and we got Nancy Hanks to come out with David Sennema who was also at the Endowment, to come out to a large conference that we had in connection with the opening of the new music center at the opera house at Indiana University. Frequently I went back to D.C. for meetings with the Endowment, the contact was very close.

*Did you feel like they were supportive, that they were trying to help you do your job?*

Absolutely.

*Even though your own board didn't.*

Yes even though my own board didn't. In fact the people at the Endowment were so supportive that I have in my file somewhere still 3 brief notes from Nancy Hanks saying how bad she felt that I was leaving the position when the time came. I always wanted to frame those and never have done it. Also to let you know how personal the relationship was with these people, when I left the commission it was the early days of the Harvard Institute for Arts Administration, I applied for a scholarship which the endowment was offering, at the time they offered scholarships to 4 State Arts Council personnel that summer, and I applied for one and I know for a fact that Clark Mitsze was instrumental in seeing that I got it. So they were very supportive, very close relationship.

*What about ACA, did you have any relationship with them at all?*

Absolutely, ACA was vital. I also got to be buddies with [unclear] in fact Ray Denal (sp?), I am still in touch with Ray Denal who became a very good buddy. This was pre Michael Newton days, these were the days when there was an architect that designed [unclear] and I knew him quite well but I can't remember his name - he was Chairman of the ACA in those days.

*Brademus?*

-No he was our Congressman. John....anyway he was the architect that did the first two iterations of [sp?] you know it kept burning down. Yes, ACA did meetings and annual conferences. There was an annual conference, huge conference that ACA did and I always went to that and took part on panels and so on there, and made frequent trips to New York.

*What did they do for you that was so useful?*

The networking, they were supportive, they were somebody to talk to.

*Ah, the loneliness thing again.*

They did a series of publications which were of use to us. They kept us....again on the networking thing... they did a newsletter that kept State Arts Councils informed about what was going on and what other State Arts Councils were doing and so on, they were very comfortable.

*Were there regional arts organizations at the time? Arts Midwest?*

No they didn't exist yet. Wait - Mid America Arts Alliance did exist I think, but that didn't include us. There was nothing in that Midwest region where I was. The Illinois Arts Council was quite advanced from where we were that Leonard Pas and George Irwin....

*He is still living.*

He is still alive, no kidding! They did what they could to kind of get some regional stuff going, but there was no.... Oh, this is another thing that the endowment did by the way, which was very useful. They sponsored regional meetings of State Arts Council Directors so that we could gather and talk about what we were going to do. They also made small travel grants available. I remember one time I went to Missouri to meet with Francis Poteet at the Missouri Council and see what they were doing. So there were things like that the Endowment.... the ACA didn't do travel grants, but they did things to promote regionalism. But no there were no Arts Alliances, there was also nothing like the Community Arts Council [*National Assembly of Community Arts Councils*]. They started during say maybe the last year that I was in Indiana.

*Just out of curiosity do you remember which ones came first?*

I don't remember the name it had a lot of C's in it. [*CACI – Community Arts Councils, Inc.*] It was some guy from Walnut Creek California.

*Ron Caia.*

Ron Caia, and a woman of New York named Winnie Scott.

*CACI, Community Arts Councils, Inc. was a committee of ACA for a little while.*

Yes okay that is who it was, yes.

*So you didn't really have any Arts Councils in Indiana?*

Oh yeah, by the time I left we had 75.

*So there were none when you came?*

Oh no, not that there were none, but I think there were 12.

*That should have been high on the list of one of your great achievements. And did you start them all?*

Oh I can't - I helped but I can't say I started them. I mean you know we made it a top priority to get people meeting and working together, which is what we had done in Wisconsin. So it was a combination of starting them, and helping them get started, and finding groups that could work in that capacity in communities.

*So how did you work with those Arts Councils?*

We held conferences in the state, we had at least one statewide conference each year that I was there, and got them together.

*Like the Endowment did for you?*

Yes, and I also went up and visited them as much as I could, and acted as our...well we were a granting agency that I suppose the main thing. They had to start councils in order to apply for money.

*Were they also a regrating agency?*

No not then. They have since become so.

*Do you think that is a good thing?*

In principal I do. I worry about it from the point of view that unless things have changed remarkably I am nervous about letting Community Arts groups be granting agencies of state and federal monies because of what I know about local politics. There is something to be said for a state agency or the Federal government coming in and granting money directly because they don't know the local politics. I can imagine that there are groups out there that are getting really short changed because they don't toe the line of what the Community Arts or Regional Arts organization thinks they should be doing.

*So can you tell me a story about how the arts fared in the political climate of Indiana at that time?*

I don't know... I can't say a specific story. I know a number of little stories. One is that I can remember that the first year when it came time.... you know you had to go before a committee session of legislators to justify your \$25,000 appropriation. I remember the first year I came to do this everybody was out of town. So here I was all by myself, and finally David Sursa who was a banker from I think Muncie, he drove over and went with me to the committee session so that I wouldn't be there by myself.

*One of your board members?*

He was one of my board members. David and I went to talk to the legislators that time. The next year there was an evening session of the committee and we got several people to go. I can remember old Alice Nichols who was a "bit fey", Alice was not a pleasant woman, but she was very feisty and very funny. I remember our being in the legislative session and there were like four commissioners there and at one point one of the legislators said, "well if we give you this...." I think we were asking for an increase maybe to \$35,000, "if we give you this money how do we know that you won't be back and wanting more?" And a couple of the board members said "Oh now, of course we wouldn't", and Alice piped up and she said, "Of course we are going to come back and ask for more. Do you imagine that this amount of money meets the arts needs of the state of Indiana, of course we need more money." So there was a real resistance on the part of some of these....

I know another story. I thought it would be a grand idea to lobby for appropriations on the basis...like the state of Illinois gave \$112,000 I think it was, that is off the top of my head, to the Arts Council. Ohio and Michigan were well established and were starting to up their state appropriations. So I thought wouldn't this be a grand idea to show where we fit in these states because we were like 38<sup>th</sup>. I think somewhere on the list. Dick Risteen (sp?) who was former Lieutenant Governor of the state, he wasn't on the original council but came in the second or third year. Dick said "no you do not want to do that, a lot of our legislators would be very proud of the fact that they were below the rest of the states."

So there was that attitude. Now you contrast that with what has happened in the years since, where the state of Indiana is one of the few arts councils that have maintained and grown, and have a huge state budget at this point, and didn't lose it when everybody else did, I don't think. Again that is something, you know talk about long-term proud, I mean my biggest accomplishment was probably getting that thing set up so other people could continue it.

I have got a lot of bitterness about this because I have never been recognized in any way by the state of Indiana or the Indiana Arts Commission for what I did. I will probably die reasonably happy even if that doesn't ever happen, but I am madder than "H---" that my work has never been recognized there. Besides everything else I groomed a secretary who has now served every position in that council office, except for Executive Director which she is too smart to take that job, who is still there after 30 plus years, and has acted as a thread...I hired her 6 weeks after the council office was established. What was that question, were did we start?

*Well the question started with anecdotes about politics and the arts.*

Okay, so there was sort of that nonreceptivity about it. Yes it was a very new thing to people in the state and in the legislature at the time. Did that get where you wanted to go or not?

Tape 2 side B

What I thought that we didn't cover that I would like to make some mention of is what it was like day by day.

*That is a great question. We will fix the questionnaire to include that.*

MW- Yes, I think that is important, I think that is something that this group are the only ones that can talk about it. Now remember the first year and a half that I was there the staff consisted of one secretary and me. The second year and a half we added an assistant and a second secretary. We did that nefariously, I can't remember how we hid her, we hid

her in the budget. But one of the things that we did right away was establish volunteer advisory panels from various places to help with grant requests and so on.

*So that you could take it out of the hands of the commissioners?*

No they did it too, we would use the panels and it would also go through the council as well.

*So they advised the council?*

Yes, they didn't make the decisions, they weren't as full blown as some, in fact I think at first....I don't think we even used them for [unclear] grants. I know we didn't at the beginning.

*So it was more program ideas, and needs of the field.*

Yes, it was an impossible job. I have often thought that one of the things that happened that was wrong is that I was too young for that job, and I should have known better, and so should they. They being the council who hired me, all fifteen hired me by the way.

On the other hand I don't believe that a person who is.....I don't believe that if I had been older at that time that I could have brought the amount and degree of energy to there that I did. I worked seven days a week, literally. It included everything: it included liaison with the National Endowment, it included grant review, it included building all of the literature of the commission, it included setting up the office, and establishing the state agency, it included field work and getting out as much as possible, I tried to get out about equivalent of one week a month on the road if I could. Still got complaints from some of the council members saying that I wasn't doing enough work on the road. Preparing for council meetings, which I think were [unclear], managing staff, attending as a visiting fireman all kinds of receptions and the that kind of stuff, doing all of the publicity. I mean everything that could be included in starting an organization and a state agency, were my responsibility. I think when you talk to people like Ray Scott, when you talk to people like Don Srteibig , and Len Pas, I think that is going to be very important to look at, because those individual contributions by these people trying to get these things going will be a little different in each case, and they are enormously important.

*So it really brings the stamp of that individual personality to the...really defining that organizational culture, because you had to do it all?*

The organizational culture was in here.....yes, absolutely because see there are things like.....Oh there was a man named Hull who was the director of the Kentucky Arts Council before Jim Edgy took over, Bill Hull I think his name was (put a question mark by that!) I remember Clark Mitze telling once in a meeting of State Arts Council directors how different it was going from state to state to sit in on council meetings.

Oh, that is something else they used to do - was they would come out and pay a visit. He [Mitze] said he went to a Kentucky Arts Council meeting and Mr. Hull very ceremoniously gave a complete report on everything the council had been doing, and when he finished Clark Mitze said he expected him to say "and now you may applaud."

Then contrast this with my approach, which was I considered myself absolutely the servant of the commission. I prepared all of the grant folders and materials and agendas etc., etc., every thing for the meetings, and the meetings were very hands-on and very participatory.

Now I was also sowing the seeds of my own doom at that point as well. I had had a real problem my whole life, which I have gotten a lot of therapy over, of being afraid of power and not wanting to recognize and exercise my own power. I know now in long term retrospect that there is no reason in the world that I couldn't have exerted that power, deliberately withheld details from them, been much more [unclear] in it than I was. I was very easy to victimize because I set myself up to be a victim.

*I forgot to ask you, what did you see as the biggest challenge that the NEA faced, and then I am going to ask about ACA and the locals.*

For the NEA I would say there biggest challenge was staying established. We all had to lobby each year, lobby our congressional delegation for the annual appropriation, that was one of their big challenges. Another challenge was to figure out what they were about to form what they were doing. I was most acquainted with what was going on in the state office; by state office I mean the [unclear] and so on. But also there was a visual arts component, music component, literature component, and so on and they were all trying to establish their identities. You know the title of Charlie Mark's book is Reluctant Bureaucrats and this is very true. One of the things that breaks my heart now is when I run in to a state arts administrator or federal arts administrator who came there from out of the highways department or someplace, that are just paper pushers. I mean these people are trying to learn how to run a federal agency for goodness sake. That was the biggest challenge, how to be a federal agency.

*What about ACA?*

ACA, I suppose their biggest challenge was how to be seen as relevant, what were the best things that they could do to be of help. They were a very friendly organization in those days.

*So why was it a challenge then to seem relevant?*

Well because again the underpinning of all this is that we were all working without a net. We were all on tightropes working without a net, there was nothing to go by. These people were like pioneers, that is the [unclear] here, all of us were pioneers, the state arts

council directors, the NEA personnel, the ACA people, we were all operating without a handbook.

*What about the locals, to the extent that there were any? What was their biggest challenge?*

Well in Indiana it was getting established. There were a few groups, there was Fort Wayne. for instance. had an active Arts Council, I think Evansville did. Indianapolis didn't, we started one in Indianapolis. Richmond Indiana had one. So there were some established councils, but otherwise this was such a brand new thing that they were just trying to figure out who they were and how they could be of use, I suppose was their biggest job. Plus who was going to do it? I mean that problem that comes up.....

*Still.*

Yes. it is the elephant in the living room. You know you and I have been talking these last few days about transition and leadership. Well get real, I mean of course these local councils are dependent on one or two major personalities because there aren't that many people interested. They are trying to pull people into it and getting them to do things. The whole problem with dealing with volunteers, it is a few voices crying in the wilderness, and like you say that probably has not changed.

*Probably not, then you have your workshops about why it should be otherwise, but it hasn't changed anything.*

I keep wondering if we shouldn't be doing workshops in what to do instead. Okay so you are faced with a situation where you have five people who are going to do all the work. How do you deal with that?

*Recognizing that this is the reality and not trying to wish it were otherwise.*

Yes that is right.

*Have you stayed in touch with the field of state arts agencies since you..., well I know you went to the Michigan Council after Indiana, but after you left Michigan have you stayed in touch with them?*

Not [*unclear*], anything that I know about what is going on in the state arts councils since I left the Michigan Council for the Arts, I think I was there for about a year and a half as director of their community arts councils program, anything I know is just strictly anecdotal and from the outside.

*If you were a young man right now thinking about starting a career, would it be in arts management or public arts management?*

No, I wouldn't. I need to qualify that I think it is a perfectly honorable thing to do, but it has to do with my own personality and the interior demons. When I started at the University of Wisconsin as a freshman I wanted to be an art teacher. Then I discovered was that what the University of Wisconsin offered was really art education, so you took a lot of things like arts for special children and stuff like that, really more art therapy kind of thing, although they didn't have the term at the time. So, I didn't do that. I wanted to be a writer and that came along a little later, kind of about the time I started graduate school. I was very interested in being a creative person of some kind. I didn't have confidence in my abilities to do that. This is something that is a deep regret to me. I didn't have confidence in my abilities to do that, and I figured the next best thing I could do to be involved in the arts was to be an arts administrator and so that is really why I went into it. That is also why I got out of it, because I simply came to terms with the fact that my strong point is not management and administration, it is not where I get my creative kicks.

*Where do you get your creative kicks now?*

Currently I get my creative kicks, I have been taking community classes in painting, drawing, and design for four years, and I have had two one man shows, and then involved in a number of other shows, I have my stuff on a web site, and so on.

*Where is it, would you be willing to let the world know?*

awaa.net, I think it is http. Anyway I have been doing that and I did through a lot of some years after I left arts administration. Actually while I was still at the Indiana Arts Commission I published a book of poetry, which was published by Wisconsin House, and directly a result of the urging and support of Professor Robert Gard. Then published 10 detective novels, 1 romance, a major book for Signet, and a business math textbook with a [unclear] that went through two editions, plus a lot of articles and stories, mostly articles, so I did do that kind of thing.

*To the extent you know about the public arts field, the NEA and the state arts agencies, has this as a field lived up to its promise?*

No.

*Why not?*

I guess I have to hark back to how we started this interview. It was perhaps my expectations were overblown, but I feel that the National Endowment and the whole movement of arts management or arts administration in this country went off the rails some time ago, and what I trace it back to, and this is more or less arbitrary, but what I trace it back to is the monumental day when the Metropolitan Opera Company declared that it was about to go bankrupt, and Nancy Hanks as chairman of the National

Endowment granted them \$50,000 to keep them from bankruptcy. That was a wrong move and the Endowment has gone a lot further as far as I know down that road.

Where I witnessed you know this stupid political thing they got into over the [unclear \_ Mapplethorpe?] which is now ancient history. But I think they squandered the possibilities that they had. They ought by now to be a multi multi million dollar or billion dollar agency. They ought to be in a position of great power in D.C. and in the nation. They ought to be known for their programming of arts by the people, community arts, individual arts, rural arts, city arts, and neighborhood arts. They ought to be an indispensable part of the American fabric, and they had every opportunity to do that, and they squandered it.

*There would have never been a Mapplethorpe controversy? Or that the people would have squashed it so fast?*

Yes both. I am saying both. I happen to believe that it is a profound mistake for any agency, state or national, to give individual arts grants, I mean grants to an individual artist I think, is the kiss of death. I think they should never gone into doing that, but that is beside the point. If they had the kind of constituency they should have had when the Mapplethorpe controversy came up, and particularly when it got to Congress with these idiots like Jesse Helms, the country would have risen up en masse to tell them to shut up.

This brings me to another point - arts for the people, the National Endowment, etc., and the eviscerating of many of the state arts councils. I think there is a great flaw and this has been that arts institutions like symphony orchestras, and museums, and opera companies, and big ballet companies, and so on who are absolute black holes, I mean you can throw as much money as you want at them and they will swallow it and come back demanding more, those organizations can afford development people. I started the development department at [unclear] the Seattle Repertory Theatre Company. When I started that development at the time, I think in 1976, it was me and the secretary, sad story of my life. But now that development department has over twenty people in it. What is wrong with this picture?

What I am trying to say is that when you have paid personnel who can lobby, those institutions have taken, how do you say the opposite of leveling the playing field, they have skewed it to the point where the community arts council and the community arts organization has no voice, and these institutions are....what are they doing. You know we have got these living museums where here is some group of musicians playing stuff that was written in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. We have opera companies that are reproducing [unclear]. We have got museums that don't deal in contemporary work; they do it so esoteric that nobody can connect to it. These people have stifled and destroyed the arts life of America. I mentioned earlier how vital it was, it was a renaissance in dance during the 60's and early 70's because the endowment gave touring grants to major arts. I remember seeing Aaron Calkins (?) in a suburb of Detroit, one of the most boring evenings I have every spent, but nevertheless. Alvin Ailey toured, the American Ballet

Theatre Company, they all were touring and dance came alive in America. They stopped doing that and dance died.

*Is there anything that you have changed your mind about? Whether philosophical or practical?*

I have changed my mind about the validity and the value of the National Endowment for the Arts.

*Tell me.*

I feel strongly that they have blown it so badly that it might be better to wipe it out and start over. Now that is radical, and I think it would be very dangerous to do that because it wouldn't start over. But I do not feel that it is the vital force that it could have been and certainly not the force that it should be by now. I no longer believe what I did about moving people to a new place on the evolutionary scale, partly because I think that was absurd to begin with, but also I believe the world has changed in America to the point where a lot of the things that we talked about and believed in are no longer practical. We have a passive society who it is nearly impossible to mobilize to do anything. We have federal administration that is absolutely *[unclear: opposed?]* to anything that comes out of the people, and to encouraging anything that comes from the people. We have a situation in which we as arts administrators and lovers of the arts have moaned and whined for years because there is not more of an arts movement in this country. Because we have failed to recognize that billions of dollars are spent on music, and billions of dollars are spent on things like film and television, and we have refused to recognize those as American arts and therefore they went off and did just fine on their own, "thank you", and they were dirty because they made money.

*Failed to recognize film and what were the other things you mentioned?*

Television, film, video, design, the music industry, the book industry.

*The dance lady who teaches in a commercial dance studio in town, would you put her in there?*

No, I mean what I am talking about is of the crafts movement. You know where people are expressing themselves and are forming these huge audiences for arts, and because of the elitist attitude we have sat back and let the train pull out without us. It is all going on and we have no voice in it, no control in it and everything else. Some years ago I was at a day long conference that was done at *[unclear]* who helped sponsor it, I don't even remember what my capacity was at this time, I guess it was when I read my *[unclear]* but speaker after speaker got up and said well here we are in one of the richest periods of America and we still don't have any money, what's wrong? And I am sitting in the back of the room thinking, what is wrong is that you didn't go after the money intelligently because it *[money]* is there to get. If the arts movement in this country got money they

couldn't stand it because it would mean that they were legitimate, and if they were legitimate they couldn't whine and cry and be special anymore. You know to be art it has got to lose money. I am sorry that is not valid, that is not a valid way of thinking. To put yourself in a position, and put your movement in a position, where it has to be dependent on money from outside: if you died then you deserved to die. *[glitch]*

.....about how to run a drive. Are arts cultures around the country doing fund drives, annual drives, are they? With a pyramid structure?

*A lot of them are.*

MW- Okay that is something I don't know.

That is good to know.

*Finally, some demographic things. What was your highest level of education?*

MW- A Ph.D. with postgraduate *[unclear]*

*A Ph.D. at Wisconsin, in adult Ed?*

University of Wisconsin, let me think, I can't remember, it was a Ph. D granted by the School of Education in curriculum and instruction, emphasis in adult education and arts administration. You would be amazed at how I skewed that around over the years depending on what I was trying to do.

[New tape]

*What management experience not in the arts have you had?*

MW- That is a hard one. I was the first development director at Seattle Repertory Theatre, which *[unclear]* an arts organization that was not an arts function.

*You know what, I don't like this question. Why don't we just say what else have you done.*

If she needs it for demographics let me do say this, the thing that is clear cut is that I was a manager, my title was manager at the Boeing Company, I probably was a Boeing manager for say four years.

*So could you just quickly run through, just significant jobs, once you got to college.*

The first significant one was director of the National Finnish American Festival at Hurley Wisconsin. This was a 15-month gig where I started a cultural arts festival with an ethnic group flavor.

*[Unclear] Okay then tell me about the job.*

Coordinator of the National Endowments Arts In Small Communities Project at the University of Wisconsin for three years. Then came the Indiana experience. Then I taught drama at a Catholic girl's school for a year, and that is another story. I was the major consultant in establishment of the Community Arts Management Program at Sangamon State University in Springfield Illinois.

*Then to Michigan?*

Yes, then a year after that I went to Michigan, worked in a B. Dalton Book Store as a receiving clerk for 6 months. Then I was director of Community Services for Michigan Council for the Arts for a couple of years. Then I went to Seattle and I worked as a professional fundraiser for a professional firm in Milwaukee.

*A for profit firm?*

Yes, I was a fundraiser. Organized campaigns for nursing homes and colleges and that kind of stuff. Then I became the first development director at Seattle Repertory Theatre, and set up their development department for them. I was there for about a year, and after that I became an adjunct instructor at Shoreline Community College in the north end of Seattle and taught business math there, and also developed and implemented an associate degree program for them in community arts management. Then I did that for 8 years.

Then I went to work at the Boeing Company first as a proposal writer - I worked on space station among other things, and several Star Wars programs. I remember going into talk to the project manager for a Star Wars proposal, and he said, well what else do you do besides writing at Boeing? I said, well I do a lot of fiction writing. And he said, oh well you'll get along fine here. Then I moved from proposal writing in to speech writing. I actually wrote the space station remarks for the president of Boeing, and did a lot of writing for one of the executive vice presidents at Boeing, a lot of speech writing. Then I moved from that into training and worked as a trainer at Boeing for probably 3 or 4 years, that is when my title was manager.

*Was that training and writing and public speaking?*

Yes, the so-called "soft skills." Then after that when I left Boeing I started my own company and I taught structured writing, and curriculum design for technical training, and [unclear] a design for computer based training. I did that for 5 years until I retired, I suppose I was about 58 when I retired.

*Then you also had a writing career.*

Okay. Meridian Maiden, which is a book of poetry written when I was about 29. Ten detective novels, one romance, a large mainstream novel for Signet through American

Library, Business Mathematics A Positive Approach - I was co-author on that, [unclear] editions.

*Was that a textbook?*

Yes, a textbook for business math at the community college level. Published by Scott Forsman, and then second edition was published by [unclear]. And then I also don't want to forget that I was co-author of The Arts in the Small Community: a National Plan, which has probably had 200,000 copies distributed over the years. Then there were a lot of articles and short stories and trade publication articles in there too.

*Have you ever held public office?*

No. Why would I have done that?

*I think they are wanting to see when you leave what did you get stimulated to do, increasingly more government, or more....*

I was so burned out that I got out of the arts completely.

*Talk about that.*

By the end of the Wisconsin Project I was burned out, except I was too young to recognize it. I went to the Indiana Program and by the end of 21/2 years I was waking up at 3:00 o'clock in the morning with my stomach in knots, I was drinking more than I should be drinking, I was totally burned out. Had to take a year and a half off from the field, get out of the field completely to recoup. Then I went to work at the Michigan council for the arts and by the end of the year was burned out again. I took six months off from the field and moved to Seattle and couldn't get a job. Well I shouldn't say couldn't get a job; I got a job as a professional fundraiser. Set up the development department at Seattle Repertory, and ran their annual drive, and had burned out enough by the end of that, so I went to part time teaching at a college. After that the only other thing I ever did was set up that two-year degree program. Then I got out of the field absolutely. I mean it was terrible burn out, I mean it was a terrible experience.

*What do you attribute that burn out to? Was it just the arts and the kinds of people in it?*

No, it was me. Nobody had ever taught me how to pace myself, or how to treat a job as a job rather than....now I'm not trying to excuse the field of arts administration for this at all, because if it were a true profession there would support, there would be guidelines that would be appropriate training, and so on, and maybe there is now. But it was my not knowing how to keep a job in perspective is what I did.

*Gender [M]r...age...*

I think I became director of Indiana Arts Commission at 28, and I am now 63.

*Anything you would like to say for posterity? Any single nugget, any advice?*

Looking back on it I would have to say no it was not a pleasant ride; it certainly was an interesting one. An interesting ride made all the more interesting by.....I know what I want to say. I want to tell anybody doing anything at any time how valuable it is to complete the circle. I can't express how much it means to me to come back and feel useful in the field, and like I have something to contribute to this field after this many years.

I feel like by being out of the field I have developed a perspective on it that I never could have had otherwise, and that unless something happened to bring me back into it again that knowledge would have been wasted. This revisiting these things 30 and 40 years later is giving me a real chance to a) unload a lot of stuff that I have been carrying for a long time, and b) it is allowing me to develop a perspective on my own life that I think is invaluable and probably karmically very important to complete my cycle in this particular existence. I hope that is eloquent enough.

*It's wonderful. Thanks Mike.*