

# FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## *ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE*

Interviewees: **Ben Jones**

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Interviewer: Jane Goodsell

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17 Pages



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*Transcript*

GOODSILL: Today is May 21, 2013. My name is Jane Goodsill, and I am interviewing Mr. Ben Jones at 611 Morton Street, Richmond, Texas. This interview is being conducted by the Fort Bend County Historical Commission and is part of the Fort Bend County History Commission Oral History Project. We are here today at the request of The Henderson-Wessendorff Foundation, taking interviews related to family members.

Thank you Ben for your help and your memories.

JONES: Well thank you, Jane.

GOODSILL: Why don't we start with your name and date of birth?

JONES: My name is Ben Jones and I was born October 18, 1959.

GOODSILL: Where were you born?

JONES: I was born at Fort Hood, Texas.

GOODSILL: So does that indicate you have some military in your family?

JONES: I was an Army baby; cost twelve dollars.

GOODSILL: You cost twelve dollars!

JONES: [laughter] That's what Mom always told me. Said they got what they paid for.

GOODSILL: Tell me a bit about of your family story and how you got to Fort Bend County.

JONES: Grew up native-Texan; I think we're four to five generations depending on what on what side. Spent most of my life on the west side of Houston. Grew up in the Spring Branch area and went to A&M. Got out of school and worked as a property manager for a year and then had the opportunity to go to work for a bank holding company called First City. Went through their training program in Houston and was assigned to their little bank here in Richmond, right across the street [from 611 Morton Street] which is now Wells Fargo. Just a few years before, it had been owned and run by a control group that Mr. Wessendorff headed. That is how our paths crossed.

GOODSILL: Let me go back just a little bit. Was your father a career military officer?

JONES: Not a long career. He took an Army commission from A&M and did a normal contract. Active duty as an Armor Officer. After his initial commitment was up, he spent time in the active reserves, and we lived in Mathis, in south Texas. We moved to Dallas for two years, then moved to Houston, in the late sixties.

GOODSILL: What kind of work did he do?

JONES: He was in the title abstract business, title insurance. He spent his whole life doing that.

GOODSILL: Where did the family come from?

JONES: My father's family came from Mississippi around the turn of the prior century. Settled in a little town called Robstown near Corpus Christi. Dad was born in a cotton field... in a house [chuckles] in a cotton field [laughter]. In a little community called Petronila, just outside of Robstown, and had a rural upbringing.

GOODSILL: And your mother's side of the family? Where did they come from?

JONES: Her roots go back a little farther. Just before the Civil War her family also came from Mississippi and settled in Erath County up near Stephenville.

GOODSILL: Okay, so you moved here, and you started working for the bank.

JONES: Yes Ma'am.

GOODSILL: And that is how you met—

JONES: Mr. Wessendorff. At that time, in the mid-eighties, we did not have branch banking in Texas. Every location that was a bank had a separate charter and was run by a separate board of directors. It was run as a separate entity. These individually-chartered banks were rolled up into holding companies like First City and Texas Commerce, and each appeared somewhat like a branch. But each one was run as a separate bank because of the way the banking laws were structured in Texas at the time. We got branch banking later. Mr. Wessendorff was still Chairman of the Board of this bank, and some of the old control group that had held stock in it were the directors. I was a young junior loan officer at the time.

GOODSILL: Do you remember your first meeting with Mr. Wessendorff?

JONES: He came strolling across the street, and I was introduced to him the first day I was there. Had a big smile and was a tall, imposing figure. He made a big impression on me. A very sincere person—his handshake was a warm one.

I worked at the bank for about three years and then went into Houston to work for the First City holding company. I did that for a little while and ended up coming back to work for him in about 1989. The position was called Controller. He needed someone to be his backup, his assistant and his go-for, [chuckles] for lack of a better term. So I did that for about a year. Enjoyed that thoroughly because of all the things he was involved in. He truly was a businessman's businessman. I am sure you've heard. His local roots go back many years. He had his lumberyard; that business went back many generations. Had his cattle. He was into real estate development. Had his rental properties, his insurance agency, and was always involved in banking. He liked to buy banks; that was an industry he enjoyed, and he knew the risk and knew how to run them. Then he had his stocks and his bond portfolio. He had his fingers in just a little bit of everything, and he was very astute at all of them.

GOODSILL: And you liked the variety?

JONES: The variety was fun, but it was mostly just "watching." I only lasted for a year because he didn't need a Controller. He was his own Controller [laughter]. Long story short, I was bored because he did everything himself. And I didn't have a whole lot to do. I did get licensed in real estate and insurance, but after I was done going through the course work, there was not a whole lot for me to do, so I looked for things to do. We had a very good parting. I did not want to burn any bridges with him because he was a very special person. I knew our paths would cross again. So I left after about a year and went back to work with some friends at another bank. Told him if he ever needed me again to please call me; I would always be there if he needed help with something.

GOODSILL: He knew you were under-employed?

JONES: [laughter] I think so, I think he understood. He was planning ahead; he knew he wasn't going to be able to do everything forever; he was just about fifteen years too early. In the meantime I needed a little more of a challenge.

One of my duties [when I worked for him] was to ride with him once a month to Sam's Club to load his station wagon with cat and dog food. [chuckles] Can you imagine a big blue Mercury station wagon going down [U.S. highway] fifty-nine loaded down with cans of cat food and dragging bottom all the way? You get the picture. Being the benevolent person that he was, he had his own animal rescue shelter — he and Mrs. Wessendorff both. And at his old homestead out on the river, we would open up cans of cat food, and I bet a hundred cats would come out of the woodwork to get something to eat [chuckles]. They had quite a menagerie of strays that he felt compelled to take care of. It was really pretty funny.

GOODSILL: In addition to all his business activities he had this going on at his house?

JONES: He took care of those around him, and animals were important to him. I remember it with both humor and fondness [laughter]. But I did need a little bit more of a challenge, so that is why I left.

GOODSILL: Were you happy with the new job?

JONES: I was. Ended up getting into public accounting after sitting for the CPA exam. The circle back ultimately came when he passed away and Mrs. Wessendorff hired me to help with the accounting for Mr. Wessendorff's estate. I had a small public accounting firm and was able to help her with that—helping Pat McDonald, who managed things for him. Pat stepped in when I stepped out and eventually ended up doing what I guess he had intended for me to do. I could never even begin to do the job that Pat has done, though. He is so well-rounded and so well-trained by both his Dad and Mr. Wessendorff. I am bragging on Pat now because he did such a wonderful job stepping in and running things when Mr. Wessendorff got sick. And then taking over after Mr. Wessendorff was gone —keeping things going, inventorying and accounting for all of the businesses—because when Mr. Wessendorff passed away, business didn't stop. He had wound down most of his operations, but he still had lots of things going on and things that had to be dealt with and accounted for. It was a big job, and that is where I came in - to help Pat.

GOODSILL: How long did you do that?

JONES: We are still doing it [chuckles].

GOODSILL: And remind us when he died?

JONES: 2006, February 27th of 2006.

GOODSILL: And do you predict that this will go on for a while?

JONES: We are almost done; we are getting it rolled over into the [Henderson-Wessendorff] Foundation. Being the benevolent person that he was, actually that both of them were.... Both of the Wessendorffs left their legacies to charity. This set a really high standard and a great example for others to aspire.

GOODSILL: Had you done work with foundations before?

JONES: Never have.

GOODSILL: Has it been an interesting process?

JONES: Very. Is its own completely different world.

GOODSILL: Can you tell us a little bit about it? Not specifically about Wessendorff but about the theory of foundations?

JONES: Private foundations. You hear about them all the time—the Gates family and a lot of industrialists from the last century. Some are famous. It is a charitable organization and it's got a special section in the Internal Revenue Code. It is exempt from income tax. It does pay an excise tax on its investment income, and it is required to give away a percentage of its assets every year. If we can manage to beat the rate of inflation, cover our operating expenses and grow our investments enough to cover our required distributions, it perpetuates itself.

GOODSILL: It is an interesting concept.

JONES: It is a way for someone to do good for society, not only while they are alive, but also after they are gone.

GOODSILL: Yes. And were they specific about the kinds of things they wanted the foundation to do?

JONES: They actually gave us a lot of latitude. They did want to home in specifically on the greater Richmond area. I think they knew the George Foundation took care of Fort Bend County as a whole, and he wanted—they wanted—to focus primarily on the Richmond area.

GOODSILL: Are you on the board?

JONES: No Ma'am. I am an officer but not a director.

GOODSILL: I suppose it is not difficult to find causes in the greater Richmond area?

JONES: It is amazing. I guess the neat thing about foundations is they fill in a lot of the "help" gaps that the federal or local governments can't. They can't do everything, and we have a lot of needs in the area that I just never even imagined. There are [nonprofit] groups out there that help with these needs; they just need funding.

It is interesting working closely with the charities in the area. And it takes special people at those charities with a real passion for what they do to make it work. It is like running a business; they have to raise funds and then use them appropriately.

GOODSILL: Will you be working yourself out of a job when you finish?

JONES: It depends on how well we can manage our investments and perpetuate the foundation. We have a board that is very, very involved. The current interest rate environment doesn't help any. When you only make a quarter of a percent on a savings account it makes it very difficult, like it does on retirees [who live on a fixed income]. When you can't make any interest return on your savings account, it is difficult. So you have to search for alternatives to try to keep your corpus growing above and beyond inflation, plus provide the income to run a foundation.

GOODSILL: Does the foundation invest in stocks?

JONES: Yes, ma'am.

GOODSILL: What they are trying to do is make more on stocks than they could on basic interest income?

JONES: Yes, ma'am. We have a corpus that we invest and monitor very closely, and we work the portfolio regularly. We have a host of managers that help us with that. We have a primary manager that acts as quarterback for all the investments managers.

GOODSILL: I guess you have to keep enough money coming in so that you can continue to give away enough money?

JONES: It is harder now than it's ever been in my lifetime. When have interest rates ever been this low? They haven't. So it has been difficult. All the foundations are facing it.

GOODSILL: I wonder what Mr. Wessendorff would think of this.

JONES: That is a good question. He liked the old ways, but he also understood progress and didn't ever look back. He knew change was inevitable and adapted to it. What would he do right now? We ask ourselves that on a regular basis. What would he do in this situation? That sometimes helps us find our answer. I think we are doing what he would do.

GOODSILL: He was diversified; he had real estate, and he had the insurance business, and he had the banking business. Is the foundation still involved with most of those things, or have they consolidated?

JONES: We have had to sell off the interest in the businesses because we can't, as a foundation, own a large interest in an operating business. We have to be, for lack of a better word, passive in our investments. So we are detached from the business operations, and these have either been discontinued or sold to the employees or other part owners.

GOODSILL: That is a good explanation. I thought I was coming in just to find out about the Wessendorffs, but there is so much else to learn, like how a foundation runs.

JONES: Another incredible example is right down the street: The George Foundation. It has done so much for the community, if people [only knew]. I think it is neat to see the things that have the George name on them around town. We are a little bit more under the radar than they are at this point.

GOODSILL: Is it a matter of public record, the way that the money is spent?

JONES: It is. The tax return we fill out and send to the Internal Revenue Service is publicly available. But I think very few people go and look. People would truly be amazed if they knew the things that The George Foundation has done and some of the things that we have done and I think that we are going to do.

GOODSILL: That is exciting. I think the Wessendorffs would really like that part of it.

JONES: I think they really would.

GOODSILL: Contributing back to the community.

JONES: Absolutely. And that's what they were all about.

GOODSILL: Toward the end of his life, the foundation had already been established. Was he spending time and energy on what the Foundation would be investing in?

JONES: We have picked up what he had invested in and carried it forward. And yes, a lot of what we have now are still some things he had before.

GOODSILL: So he had given quite a bit of thought to how he wanted—

JONES: He did. And the people he surrounded himself with had a good feeling for what he would want, what he was doing, and how he did it. That is where Pat really comes in. It's been a blessing. Pat really knew backwards and forwards what all Mr. Wessendorff had: how he would do it and how to run it. And [Pat] really has picked up the baton and run with it. Taking his legacy forward to the next level. We are all very proud of Pat and how he has been such an extension of Joe Clyde.

GOODSILL: Very interesting. Are there any questions remaining I should ask regarding how a foundation works before I ask about the personalities of the Wessendorffs?

JONES: The local community is very lucky to have two significant foundations that pour money into it for their benefit. I don't know that they know how lucky they are. The Wessendorffs didn't ask for notoriety or publicity. They were very quiet, and I think we have continued that approach for the time being. Foundations are wonderful—wonderful things for the community—and serve an enormous purpose for good in this country, especially right now.

GOODSILL: Especially right now. Is there any one thing that Mr. Wessendorf had his eye on?

JONES: He did so many things. You can go in his house. We call it Miss Janey's because it was his old homestead where he grew up. His mom was Jane. There is a curio cabinet in the foyer. The cabinet and the walls are full of accolades and commendations for things that he did for the community and for the state and for the country that are so numerous I don't think you could pick any one particular thing. He did love his school, which was A&M. One thing Pat and I really wanted to do, and the board indulged us in this, was set up an endowment for scholarships for Lamar Consolidated School District and other near-by districts. It is very significant, and it will send several students every year for a full ride to A&M - for perpetuity.

I think if there is anything he would be most proud of, it would probably be that. He went to A&M, his dad went to A&M, and his grandfather went to A&M. Pat and I also went to A&M, so that was special to us.

GOODSILL: All right. Let me go to some other questions. Your connection was primarily with Mr. Wessendorff as opposed to Mrs. Wessendorff?

JONES: It was initially, until she hired me to come back and help with the estate, and that is when I got to know her. Before then, I really didn't know her that well. I regret that I didn't get to know her better—or until that time—because she was such a fascinating person.

GOODSILL: What is it you found fascinating about her?

JONES: She was probably the most well read person I have ever met. She could carry on a conversation with anyone about...just about anything. She was truly amazing. I think she could carry on a discussion with a youngster, the Dalai Lama, the President of the United States, anybody; and she could hold her own. She was fascinating when she was holding court and telling stories and commenting on world events and what was going on around her. From a casual handshake and hello you might not think that, but she was quite a package in that regard.

GOODSILL: Was she an opinionated person, or was she an inquisitive person?

JONES: Oh my, yes. Both very...

GOODSILL: She was opinionated [laughter].

JONES: I think anybody who knew her will say that. It was black and white.

GOODSILL: So when she was discussing an issue she usually had a point of view on it?

JONES: Absolutely. Part of her thought-process was to develop an opinion.

GOODSILL: Did she tend to be more liberal or more conservative in her opinions, if those are the right descriptors?

JONES: You know, that is a good question. I think she could work both sides of that argument and do it well. And I think she could be either.

GOODSILL: Was she passionate about animals as well?

JONES: Absolutely. She had her own animal shelter that she took care of.

GOODSILL: Separate from his?

JONES: Separate from his. Actually it was bigger.

GOODSILL: Did SHE have people that would go to Sam's for her?

JONES: She did. People that would help her take care of her animals, especially her dogs, that she kept in a big kennel by the house. They barked, and all the neighbors loved that! Fascinating person to visit with. And she was in her element when she was entertaining someone in her home. When we would go over to sign papers for something, it wasn't a short visit. You had to sit down and have coffee and cake, and her staff waited on us and made sure we were taken care of. It was an event.

GOODSILL: She would engage you in conversation?

JONES: Absolutely. It was quite an experience to go over and discuss business with Mrs. Wessendorff. It was a delight.

GOODSILL: [laughter] Was she pretty much up-to-date on the business things?

JONES: She was. It was always interesting that she kept her business interests completely separate from Mr. Wessendorff's. They did not commingle anything from a business standpoint, and that comes from her dad who told her, "Keep it separate. Keep your own and pay attention to it."

GOODSILL: And so she did. She followed her investments and kept track of the money.

JONES: Had her own bankers and her investment people.

GOODSILL: She was a philanthropist as well?

JONES: Yes, ma'am. Had her Well Spring Center that I am sure you have discussed, and she was passionate about it.

GOODSILL: We will just pretend people haven't heard anything about it. Do you want to give a little thumbnail sketch?

JONES: She had a dream to set up what we call Well Spring Center, which is in Blanco [Texas]. It sits in the middle of a large tract of the most beautiful hill country you have ever seen. On the hill of this property, she set up a retreat for church groups to use.

She wanted people to know Jesus personally, not only as Savior but also as a friend, and built this beautiful facility with a beautiful chapel and a large statue of Jesus she had commissioned. Dorms, library, and kitchen facility. It is a beautiful layout in a magnificent part of the state. Groups can use it for a token clean-up fee.

GOODSILL: So that was part of her philanthropy?

JONES: That was part of her philanthropy and part of her personal mission in life, and she was passionate about that.

GOODSILL: Was she well read in religion, theology, and philosophy, too?

JONES: If she picked up a book that she liked in particular, she would order a case of them and give everybody one. We still have cases. She had a library at Well Spring with hundreds and hundreds of books. I have snagged a few and taken them home and am reading some of them. Yes. She was passionate about reading and understanding things beyond this world.

GOODSILL: So she was very much a person of this world but she was interested in the things beyond this world.

JONES: Yes, ma'am. Very.

GOODSILL: She wasn't a shy person.

JONES: No. [laughter] Not at all. No. I guess one of the funniest things I ever heard about Loise is from Joe D. This was after Mr. Wessendorff had passed away. This was just a few years ago. He came in one day and I said, "How are you doing, what have you been up to?" He said, "Well, I went to lunch today with Loise and her friend, Josephine Abercrombie." I think they went to River Oaks Country Club and had lunch. He said, "It is really funny sitting and visiting with two women who have never been told 'no' their entire lives." So yes, she was very opinionated, and you did not want to impede her progress on whatever particular mission she was on at that moment.

GOODSILL: That is a good way to describe it.

JONES: And you did not want to tell her, "No." [chuckles].

GOODSILL: No you didn't want to, and she probably didn't hear that too much.

JONES: No. She kept folks around here challenged when it came to solving problems for her; I will put it that way.

GOODSILL: For you specifically? Working with the financial sector of the estate you must have had times when you had to tell her no.

JONES: You know, I was kind of in the background in that regard. Pat and Joe D. and Jack Moore dealt with her more on a business decision level than I had to. I just recorded the history, which was fine with me. [chuckles]

GOODSILL: Good [chuckle]. For those of us who didn't know her, it is valuable to have your descriptions.

JONES: Well it's funny. At her funeral, the first thing that Seth Deleery, one of our directors and the priest that used to run the Well Spring Center, the first words out of his mouth at the eulogy were, "Loise could be difficult," [chuckle] and everybody who knew Loise knew that. It was a while before the laughter settled down. That being said, she was one of the most benevolent, loving, giving, caring people you could ever hope to meet.

GOODSILL: Two sides of a coin, I think you might say. A person who is very driven and very set in their belief system, and yet they have another side of them that is extremely generous and giving.

JONES: She truly was.

GOODSILL: It just had to be done her way.

JONES: That's right. [laughter] That's a good way to put it.

GOODSILL: You described how you first met Joe Clyde. And you talked about his life work a little bit. How about his leisure activities?

JONES: Loved his quail dogs. Every morning he would go on his morning walk. He always kept a couple of good quail dogs trained and ready to go at any moment. Part of his morning routine was to walk his dogs down along the river at his ranch just outside of town at his old homestead. He loved to hunt quail. There [pointing to a framed picture hanging on the wall of the conference room] is a picture of him with his dogs. And there is another great picture. One of our favorites - it is out right now being copied - is of him and his good friend, Hilmar Moore—rest in peace, beloved mayor—hunting quail together.

GOODSILL: I think I have seen pictures of Loise hunting.

JONES: She had her own shotguns and in her younger days, was a bird hunter.

GOODSILL: So she was an outdoorswoman as well a force of nature.

JONES: She was! I have heard stories about duck hunting. I have seen pictures of them on snow skis together.

GOODSILL: So they had quite an active life.

JONES: They were. What is neat is that they were unpretentious. They didn't surround themselves with opulence by any means, but they—especially Loise—grew up with a lot of people whose names you would recognize.

GOODSILL: From Houston?

JONES: From the Houston area. Yes, ma'am.

GOODSILL: And probably continued to rub elbows with and be in contact with them her whole life.

JONES: Absolutely. And they did business together their whole life also. That was part of their circle. They were part of that "greatest generation," and they all trusted each other and knew each other. One thing that I think is interesting, the ones who fought in the war (WW II) knew they could trust each other. And they did business together on a handshake, and they weren't afraid of anything. They lived through that. What was going to hurt them here?

GOODSILL: You know, I never heard anybody say that before, about how they fought together and had a sense of trust.

JONES: Someone did a really neat book on the veterans that came from this area. You see the pictures of all the old patriarchs in their uniforms and all the different branches of service they were in. They all appreciated what each other went through. It was a club you couldn't join; you had to have been through it. They knew they could trust each other. You could deal on a handshake. They took a lot of business risk, but business was just business. There was nothing to be afraid of. Plus they had gone through the depression, so [laughter] how much worse could it possibly be?

GOODSILL: That is a very interesting perspective. Were you in any organizations with him?

JONES: I was not. I was just a youngster and watched him participate in some of these. I mentioned all the numerous things he has done in the community. The one that stands out in recent history, probably as big as anything, is when The George Foundation had its troubles back in the early eighties.

It was under pressure by the Attorney General to get its act together due to some internal issues, the way that it was being run. And that is no secret. But Mr. Wessendorff played a huge part in getting things turned around and saving it from being taken over by the state.

One of the residual results of that was.... The George Foundation used to run the Morton Cemetery. Part of what Mr. Wessendorff did was to help eliminate distractions over there while they were trying to get the George Foundation re-grounded and properly run. He took over the management of the cemetery. He took that on himself personally and moved all the records over here [to his office] and setup the process to sell the plots and maintain the accounts and pay the bills. All of that was done by his staff, no compensation to him at all. He used his people to do all of that and remove that burden from the George Foundation. We continue to assist the Cemetery Association, as we are able. It was very important to him to make sure that the cemetery was taken care because it is such an incredible and special historical landmark.

GOODSILL: Are his family members over there?

JONES: His family is buried there.

GOODSILL: So the George Foundation got turned around.

JONES: Yes ma'am. The George Foundation ultimately did get turned around with a new board established. And they turn the directors over every ten years, which lends legitimacy to the management of the organization. If anyone can be credited with getting that organization back on track it would be Joe Wessendorff. That is a great legacy in itself.

GOODSILL: That's a good story. Did he ever talk to you about his war experiences?

JONES: Those guys didn't talk about it much. What we heard were stories usually from some of his friends. Some of these memories are a little bit fuzzy. Working at the bank across the street, sometimes his old friends would occasionally call over there looking for him. I got a call one time and struck up a conversation with one of his old Army buddies. He was looking for Mr. Wessendorff, and we just visited a minute.

I was going to direct him over to Mr. Wessendorff's office, but he went into a story. He said, "Yeah. Mr. Wessendorff, Joe Clyde, and I were in the same regiment." I believe it was the 363rd Regiment, 91st Division. And he said these numbers; I want to say I remember these numbers correctly because it stuck in my mind.

He said, "There were a hundred and seventy-nine officers that went over on that boat, and just over a dozen of us made it back." The Italian campaign was a terrible, terrible, bloody, awful campaign that didn't get the publicity that D-Day got. On Normandy, the 91st and other groups were fighting in Italy to draw the Germans away from France, to help make D-Day easier. It was just its own terrible miserable bloody campaign that started before D-Day ever got started. So really, that is the only story I ever heard, and he never talked about his experiences to me that much.

GOODSILL: He just came home and got on with his life?

JONES: He did. And again, I think that's why he would get emotional, especially later in life, from what I understand. He didn't let it slow him down, and I think he felt lucky to have made it. And that was probably another reason for his drive. He was here; he survived for a reason, and so he better put his time to good use. Not just for him, but for others around him.

GOODSILL: Did he have injuries, do you know? Was he in good health most of his life?

JONES: The only time I remember him having an issue when I was working for him was when he got a mosquito bite and got encephalitis in 1990 or 1991. He was in the hospital for several days, or maybe a couple of weeks; I can't remember. He was very, very sick. Felt awful. He said it was like the worst hangover he ever had. [chuckle] It was terrible. He did fight throat cancer later and had to get a device to help him talk.

GOODSILL: Did he smoke?

JONES: In his earlier days, but not since I have known him. I have known him since 1985.

GOODSILL: What was his personality like?

JONES: When he spoke, you respected everything he said. He commanded respect, first of all, and he deserved it. Never demanded it. He enjoyed life very much. He was such a brilliant businessman and such an authority in all of his endeavors. He didn't have to act in a way that was pretentious. He was a very friendly, warm person.

GOODSILL: Decisive person.

JONES: Very decisive.

GOODSILL: So here we have two people married to each other who are very commanding.

JONES: [laughter]

GOODSILL: How did you see that working out?

JONES: That was an interesting dynamic, and I am not sure I ever...that is a good question. How did that work for so many years?

GOODSILL: Very interesting to ponder.

JONES: I think the fact that they kept their business separate probably helped.

GOODSILL: Yes. It's probably a brilliant idea. [laughter]

JONES: They were both very unpretentious, but they were both very, very blessed in a lot of ways. They were very astute in their business dealings, but were more benevolent than I think you could ever begin to imagine, both of them.

Last little story: I had a chance to visit with our City Manager, Terry Vela, and with Glen Gilmore who was former City Manager, now Assistant City Manager. Glen knew Mr. Wessendorff for years. Mr. Wessendorff and Mayor Hilmar Moore were great friends and very close. He knew so many families here in town. Glen said he could call up and say, "So-and-so can't pay her water bill and she is several months behind. Just thought you'd want to know that." And Mr. Wessendorff would go pay the bill. That was not just a one-time occurrence. He stepped up to the plate and took care of a lot of people. Both of them set a great example for all us, and we are grateful you are helping with this project to document their lives.

GOODSILL: Oh, our pleasure. Thank you so much, again.