

An Interview with
Jane Cooper Stacy

at Southeast Missouri State University in
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

22 March 2013

interviewed by Jeff D. Corrigan



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Politics in Missouri

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PREFACE

Jane Cooper Stacy was born in Cairo, Illinois, on July 23, 1938. The daughter of the Rev. A.B. Cooper and Janie May Lawrence Cooper, Jane grew up near Charleston, Missouri. After attending schools in Charleston, Jane enrolled at Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau. In 1973, she was named as Director of Alumni Services for Southeast Missouri State University by President Mark F. Scully. She served in this position until her retirement in 2009. Jane Cooper Stacy is the author of two books: *A Mosaic of Memories: Of the Alumni Merit Award Recipients, Southeast Missouri State University (2011)* and *Athletic Hall of Fame, Southeast Missouri State University (2012)*. In the interview, Jane discusses religion, politics, her relationship with Southeast Missouri State University, and family life, including her sister and brother-in-law, Betty and Warren Hearnese.

The interview was taped on a CompactFlash card, using a Marantz PMD-660 digital recorder and an audio-technica AT825 microphone placed on a tripod. There are periodic background sounds but the recording is of generally high quality.

The following transcript represents a rendering of the oral history interview. Stylistic alterations have been made as part of a general transcription policy. The interviewee offered clarifications and suggestions, which the following transcript reflects. Any use of brackets [] indicates editorial insertions not found on the original audio recordings. Physical gestures, certain vocal inflections such as imitation, and/or pauses are designated by a combination of italics and brackets []. Any use of parentheses () indicates a spoken aside evident from the speaker's intonation, or laughter. Quotation marks [“”] identify speech depicting dialogue, speech patterns, or the initial use of nicknames. Em dashes [—] are used as a stylistic method to show a meaningful pause or an attempt to capture nuances of dialogue or speech patterns. Words are *italicized* when emphasized in speech or when indicating a court case title. Particularly animated speech is identified with **bold** lettering. Underlining [] indicates a proper title of a publication. The use of underlining and double question marks in parentheses [(??)] denotes unintelligible phrases. Although substantial care has been taken to render this transcript as accurately as possible, any remaining errors are the responsibility of the editor, Sean Rost.

Narrator: Jane Cooper Stacy
Interviewers: Jeff Corrigan
Date: March 22, 2013
Transcribed by: Teresa Bergen

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[Begin Track 1. Begin Interview.]

10 Jeff Corrigan: This is Jeff Corrigan, oral historian for the State Historical Society of Missouri and I'm in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, at the alumni center on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University to interview for the first time Jane Cooper Stacy. Today's date is Friday, March 22, 2013. Could you start off by telling me when and where you were born?

15 Jane Cooper Stacy: I was born in Cairo, Illinois, Saint Mary's Hospital. My dad was the Baptist preacher at Charleston, Missouri, which is 14 miles away. And that was the only hospital at that time that we had available. Because it's been seventy-four years. (laughs) And so we were born there. I was born there. And my sister, who's seventeen months older than I was, was born there, too.

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Corrigan: Okay. Now, what year were you born in?

Stacy: In 1938, July the 23rd.

25 Corrigan: Okay. And you have eight siblings, is that—or there are eight of you?

Stacy: I have seven. There are eight of us. I'm the youngest of eight children.

Corrigan: Okay.

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Stacy: Of a preacher's kid.

Corrigan: And could you tell me all their names?

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Stacy: Okay.

Corrigan: Could you do it in order from oldest?

40 Stacy: Yes. Yes. I even brought this picture. My mother and dad came from Melbourne, Arkansas. And so they came. And he went to Ouachita to get his degree to preach. So during that time at Ouachita, the two oldest were born. Allen Autry, A-u-t-r-y, and Velna, V-e-l-n-a May Cooper. Both of these were born in Ouachita. Then they moved to Brinkley, Arkansas, where Daddy took his first pastorate. And born there were Julia Warren, Betty Cooper Hearnese, and Jennie Cooper. They moved to Charleston for Daddy to take his second
45 pastorate. Missouri. And born there were Dr. James F. Cooper, and he was born at home. But then Dr. Rose Marie Jordan. And I was the last one. And I was born Margaret Jane

Cooper: Do I hate that name? Yes. I never use it. Margaret Jane Cooper. And so that's the eight of us.

5 Corrigan: Okay. And what was your father's name?

Cooper: Reverend Alan B. Britten, B-r-i-t-t-e-n, Cooper.

Corrigan: And what was your mother's name?

10 Cooper: May, in fact Janie May Lawrence, L-a-w-r-e-n-c-e, Cooper. My mother and dad were second cousins. And we were always told never to tell that. Because in those times, people thought all their children might be idiots if you had second cousins. (laughs) So we never told anyone that Mom and Daddy were second cousins.

15 Corrigan: That's funny. So your father was a Baptist pastor?

Cooper: He was a Baptist pastor.

Corrigan: And so you were born in Illinois, but your family was living in Charleston.

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Cooper: Charleston, Missouri.

Corrigan: Okay. And that's where you grew up in.

25 Cooper: I did.

Corrigan: Okay. And did your parents ever leave Charleston?

Cooper: No.

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Corrigan: Okay, so once they got to Charleston, that was their—

Cooper: They stayed.

35 Corrigan: Okay. Now could you tell me a little bit about what you remember of Charleston, growing up there. Anything from where you went to school, the names of the school, to the size of it. Anything you kind of just, when you think of Charleston, Missouri, at the time when you grew up there.

40 Cooper: I thought, we lived sort of out in the country. And Daddy never allowed us to live in a parsonage. Because he had all these kids. And he said he didn't want to be responsible for people looking and seeing if we were tearing up things because there were ten of us. So he bought this house. So we lived out in the country. And we had it packed full all the time of people. I mean, just anyone. My dad was one of these people who really believed in
45 Christianity. He believed it worked. If somebody came by—

[End Track 1. Begin Track 2.]

Cooper: —and they needed a place to stay. I mean, I could tell you some of the weirdest stories in the world of people who came and stayed for six months we hardly knew. Because he believed that your job as human being was to reach out. That has really affected all of us. Sometimes it's a negative because you think oh, I'm never going to live in that atmosphere again. But by the time I came along, all the rest of them except the youngest three, they were gone anyway. So it didn't bother me in any way. You're shaped by—I had read about this, too, Jeff, over the years. You're shaped by your placement in the family. Especially in a big family. My dad's personality and mine were so similar. He had a great wit. I mean, just could knock you out. And I was an easy kid. Every one of them will tell you that. I was an easy kid. So he was tired of raising kids. And so he just liked to enjoy this kid who could just knock him out with jokes all the time. So I was always the pet of Daddy, and everyone knew it. And Jim was the pet of Mama. So if we needed something, we decided who was the best to go intervene to get what we needed. And we could always work it.

Corrigan: So you were the youngest daughter, and then Jim was the youngest son.

Cooper: Youngest son.

Corrigan: But there was one in between you, right?

Cooper: Rose Marie, who was in playing the piano and never knew that life went on. And she was a brilliant musician. And she really was. It was—Jenny was brilliant in reading. And she taught here for years and years. In English. And she shared her stories in that book, *Mosaic of Memory*. No it's not, because she was faculty at Mardimort(??) But we've all gone in different areas. We have not, we tried to be, to stay with family. Daddy saw something, and I would have to say that while Mama had the steadiness of the family, Daddy had the dreams. And he could see something in everyone. It was sickening. I mean, it really was. And Warren and Betty, and here's the picture of Warren when Warren was going to law school. And I went up every summer and took care of the kids, because Warren was too cheap to hire a babysitter, so I had to go up there and do that. And we were always close. Because I was only nine when Betty and Warren married.

Corrigan: Okay.

Cooper: So we would go. And Daddy, while they were in law school, Daddy was the chairman of the Republican Party in Mississippi County. I know you didn't know that. But there were only four Republicans. And we used to say they caucused in a phone booth. But he called Warren. And he said, "Warren, this is Daddy," or whatever he called him. He said, "I need you to come home." "Well, okay, Brother Cooper." [Daddy] said, "Yeah," he said, "Come home." Warren just drove like a maniac home. And he thought Daddy had found out he was ill or something. He said, "Meet me at home oil(??)," which was out of town. And all the way home, Warren kept thinking okay, he's going to tell me that he's desperately ill and I have to come home. And he said to him when he got there, "Now, Warren, you know, you're right over at the law school. And we need a representative from Mississippi County. And

there's not one real reason, I would think, that you can't do that. And that will help pay your way through law school. And you'll be a very good representative." And [Warren] said, "And you called me home for this?" He said, "Today's the deadline." And he said, "And I've already paid your fees. So we have to go up and you have to sign it for yourself." And
5 [Warren] said, "Well, what ticket do you want me to file on?" Because he knew Shorty(??) his dad was a Democrat. He said, "Well, I want you to file on the Democratic ticket. You can't get elected on a Republican ticket." And they went up—

[End Track 2. Begin Track 3.]

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Cooper: —to the courthouse. And that was his start.

Corrigan: So your father was the head of the Republican committee.

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Cooper: Uh huh, uh huh.

Corrigan: So this was his son-in-law.

Cooper: His son-in-law.

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Corrigan: Okay. So Warren's family was Democratic at the time.

Cooper: Yes.

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Corrigan: Okay. And he was from the same area? He was from Charleston?

Cooper: Yeah.

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Corrigan: Okay. So you mentioned, before we get too far, you said you kind of all went in different directions. So you said Rose Marie, did she get a PhD in English then or something?

Cooper: Jenny got a PhD in English. Rose Marie got her PhD, too, in music.

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Corrigan: And she taught here at SEMO.¹

Cooper: No, she never taught here. Jenny did.

Corrigan: Oh, Jenny did. So she went in English?

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Cooper: Yes. Rose Marie went to Oklahoma Baptist University.

Corrigan: Okay. And then your brother, Dr. James—

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Cooper: Jim went to Baylor, to Baptist school, and got his MD. And he was a chief of surgery at DePaul in Saint Louis for a number of years.

¹ Southeast Missouri State University.

Corrigan: Okay. And then we know what Betty did. She was the first lady, and then she was a representative. And what did Julia do?

5 Cooper: She, it's sort of demeaning to say it, but she's a homemaker. I mean, really. She helped all of us.

Corrigan: That's good. Yeah. And then you said there was also, is it Velma?

10 Cooper: Velna. Weird name. I've never heard it before. And she was a public school music teacher and private piano. She's a musician, too.

Corrigan: Okay. And then was it Autry?

15 Cooper: Autry. And he was a drug salesman. Smartest one of us. Sort of had an alcoholic problem, which kept him from knocking the socks off of everybody. But he definitely was the smartest one of us.

Corrigan: Okay. And then Alan was the oldest?

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Cooper: Alan Autry.

Corrigan: Oh, Alan Autry. Same person. Got you. That's right. Okay, that's what I have down. Okay. So I'm assuming a family of ten in Charleston, Missouri, everybody knew who you were, the family.

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Cooper: Right. Right.

Corrigan: How big was the church at the time?

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Cooper: It was probably, I guess it was the biggest Protestant church. I can't tell you how the membership was. But I really did not go to the church where Daddy was pastor, because he stayed at Charleston ten years. And then he came up and started the Chara(??) Bible on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University. And it just did not work out for him to stay at that. It didn't work out for him. He thought it was going to be a step up, but it wasn't, in his mind. It wasn't what he wanted to do. So he spent the remainder of his life, he built, I think, twelve churches. He raised the money and built twelve churches all over the counties there. And three of them were black. And he had a, I think one of the stories that, when you talk about things that you remember, when the war, when the world war was going on, the first person killed in Mississippi County was a black man by the name of Leroy Tarver. And his parents, Sam and Essie Tarver, lived on our property. And they farmed with Daddy on halves. And so we were very close to the Tarver family. And Leroy was killed. And they brought the body home. This was in '42, I believe. And Sam and Essie came and said, "Brother Cooper, we want you to do the service." And he said, "It will be my privilege." And so he was supposed to go to Mercy Seat Baptist Church. This sounds like nothing. In Charleston, it was like tremendous, the fact that he was going. I mean, this was negative. You

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are not, a white pastor is not going into a black church to preach a funeral. In the first place, the funerals are nothing alike. So you've got to have a white preacher that knows how to preach at a black funeral. But that was no problem. And so I said to my dad, because I heard this in town, somebody told me, "That white preacher better not go into that Negro church—

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[End Track 3. Begin Track 4.]

Cooper: —he'll be sorry if he does." And they said it where I could hear it. So I was just worried to death. Because I thought, my life is over if something happens to my dad. And he looked at me and he said, "Listen. When that bullet came and hit that boy, it didn't look at the color of his skin. And I'll be walking down that aisle to preach," he called him Rabbit Ears. He said, "I'll be walking down the aisle to preach Rabbit Ears' funeral."

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Corrigan: And you would have been pretty young.

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Cooper: Yeah, I was born '38.

Corrigan: Okay, so four or five.

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Cooper: Just worried to death. I mean, maybe I didn't have a sense of how scary it was. But I knew Charleston. And it was racist as could be. Then when I got in my senior year in high school, which would have been '56, that was our first year of integration. And eight students, eight black students, came into our senior class. And I spent a good part of my time—I worked for the principal—telling the kids, the other kids, "You better not do a thing to them. You touch one of them, you better not." And it was just like, we had some incidents. But there were some of us who stood up. It was no big effort on my part, as far as I was concerned. I was raised that way. And it was not like well I'm doing this and making this stand; this was the only stand I could make.

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Corrigan: How big was your school at the time, your class?

Cooper: I think our class was, we had ninety-six people in our senior class.

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Corrigan: Okay. So you graduated in '56?

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Cooper: Fifty-six. But those are the things I remember. It was a fun time for me to live. Because you were just, you weren't afraid of doing half the things that they do now. You just went out. I didn't know anybody that took drugs. And I would have known it, believe me. They came in to interview, as I told you, I worked for the principal's office all my four years in high school. And they said they were coming in, drug people were coming in and they wanted to interview some of the people from the senior class. And so they went out and asked my mother, and they said, "We want to interview her." And my mother went ballistic. She said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "I told them. We told them." He said, "If there are any drugs in Charleston, she won't be using them, but she'll know where they are." So my mother thought that was okay then. But it just terrified her. She was very, she was the

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perfect complement to somebody who just walked in the room and took over the room all the time. She didn't care. She was pleased for him to have all the glory he could possibly have.

5 Corrigan: So your dad, you said, was kind of the dreamer of everything. And then your mother was a perfect complement to him?

10 Cooper: Yeah. And she liked being a mother. She didn't want anybody ever to give her any praise or anything. She wouldn't even take praise for being a mother. Because she never would give us that much compliment that we might be okay. (laughs) And she lived her life like that. No matter what you did, well, you know, "You can do better than that."

Corrigan: Did your parents, it sounds like they must have really valued education?

15 Cooper: Education was a big thing. And Christianity. Religion. Not as a sham, but as something that possesses your soul.

20 Corrigan: So it didn't matter, obviously there are a lot of girls in your family. But it sounds like you all went to school and that it was valued. And it sounds like a lot of Baptist schools. But it didn't matter whether you were a boy or a girl, a good, solid education was—

Cooper: That's right.

Corrigan: Okay.

25 Cooper: Music was very important. I mean, every one of us are musical. Now I'm probably the least musical.

Corrigan: Is this mostly piano or other kinds of instruments?

30 Cooper: We always had, we always—

[End Track 4. Begin Track 5.]

35 Cooper: —took piano. We always could sing. We can pick up a book now, I mean, if we're all still sitting there, we can pick up a book. "You take second, you sing third, you do this." I mean, those things are normal to us. They're not normal to most families. But we know how to do that. "You're bass. Sing tenor low." I mean, that's just part of it.

40 Corrigan: Okay. So they really valued education. When you were at Charleston, was it all, was grade school and high school all public schools?

Cooper: Yes.

45 Corrigan: Okay. Okay. I wasn't sure the size of the town at the time. So, and then, did most people, you said mostly Baptist schools.

Cooper: Not really. Velna and Autry went to Ouachita, which is not a Baptist—yes, it is a Baptist school, excuse me. And Betty and Jim went to Baylor. Jenny and I went to Cape. Rose Marie went to Oklahoma Baptist. So I guess most of them did go to a Baptist school. I didn't go to a Baptist school.

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Corrigan: And how far are we from Charleston right now?

Cooper: It will take you 45 minutes to get there.

10 Corrigan: Okay. Just straight down to Mississippi County?

Cooper: Mm hmm.

15 Corrigan: Okay. Before I move on, after high school. So how did, you said when integration happened in '56, did it go smooth, over all?

20 Cooper: Smoother than most people thought it would. And part of that is because Adam Holman came in, black guy. And he could play basketball. And that really helped. Because they wanted him out on that basketball—Charleston is a big football and basketball town. And Adam, they saw the handwriting on the wall in this. Six-three. Could shoot it every time he threw it. So that was big for them.

Corrigan: So that was one commonality for a lot of people?

25 Cooper: One commonality, it was.

30 Corrigan: Was it the typical small town that sports were everything? That's valued in a lot of small towns. Basketball, football. It's kind of like the whole community comes out to the games.

Cooper: Yes. Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. So this is one common ground that they could—

35 Cooper: That's right. They could relate.

Corrigan: So you don't remember any major incidences that happened that senior year, while you were there?

40 Cooper: No. Not while I was there.

45 Corrigan: And then, did it take, if the school integrated in '56, did it take, what about the town as a whole? How do you think that went, or how long did that take to start to really integrate things?

Cooper: I think it depends on the people involved, black and white. Some years it's better than others, even today. I think also it's, a part of it is, are there people who are good on the basketball team and the football team? And that will always be there. Are they good singers? What are their talents?

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Corrigan: Okay. Did you, what did you do after high school?

Cooper: I came to college up here. And after two years, I married Bill Stacy, who played football here. He finished. And then we went to SIU Carbondale where he got his PhD in speech. And then we moved back here. And he took a job in the speech department.

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Corrigan: And was he from here?

Cooper: He was from Jefferson City.

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Corrigan: Oh, okay. Okay. And then what was your major?

Cooper: History.

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Corrigan: Oh, okay. So you went to SIU Carbondale, right? The main campus.

Cooper: Yes. But when I went to Carbondale, I worked at Illinois Baptist State Association, which was the state headquarters in Illinois. While he went to school. Paid the bills.

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Corrigan: Okay. So he came back here and then, we'll go back to this a little bit later. When did you get married, then?

Cooper: We married at the end of our sophomore year. And nine months and three weeks later, I had a child. Mark. And that three weeks was very important, being a preacher's kid.

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[End Track 5. Begin Track 6.]

Cooper: And so and he is now, he's an MD at Duke University, and his area is Parkinson's.

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Corrigan: Okay. So you have, so first off with Bill. So that's your husband. So he was in the speech department here.

Cooper: Mm hmm.

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Corrigan: And then he eventually became university president, correct?

Cooper: Yes.

Corrigan: And when did he serve as president?

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Cooper: Oh, heck. From 1980 to 1990. And I started in 1973, being director of alumni services. And by that time, I had gotten my degree here.

5 Corrigan: In history?

Cooper: In history.

Corrigan: Okay. And then, so you have three children, correct?

10 Cooper: Three children.

Corrigan: Okay. So you have Dr. Mark Stacy. And then I have Sarah Stacy Dyer?

Cooper: True.

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Corrigan: Okay. And then James Stacy.

Cooper: James F. Stacy.

20 Corrigan: F. Stacy. Okay. And is it correct, they all came here for undergrad?

Cooper: They did. And they all graduated from here.

Corrigan: Okay. And then Mark, he's the one you said was at Duke right now?

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Cooper: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. And what do your other two children do?

30 Cooper: Sarah married Dan Dyer. And she's an interior designer. She's getting her seminary degree. She has three children of her own. And they live in Canton, Ohio. And her husband is number three with Smucker's.

Corrigan: Okay. And what does James do?

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Cooper: Jim does, I say he's a technical engineer. He's out, like street and planning, in Madison, Wisconsin. And his wife works at the museum there. They don't have any children.

40 Corrigan: Okay. So I'll go back a little bit. Did you ever, did you work, you said you worked for the school in high school. Did you ever work outside of the school?

Cooper: Unh-hm.

45 Corrigan: Okay. And so you graduated and you came up to SEMO. Did you work while you went here at all?

Cooper: No.

Corrigan: Okay. And then you and your husband met, you said sophomore, or when did you actually meet? You said you got married sophomore year. Did you meet freshman year?

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Cooper: We met our freshman year. Both of us were involved in the Baptist Student Union on campus. And we met at the end of—during our freshman year. And we started dating. And then we dated all through our sophomore year. And then we got married.

10 Corrigan: Okay. And then you were here two more years then, right, while he finished?

Cooper: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: And then you went to Carbondale.

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Cooper: Yes.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. And then you came back, and then you eventually graduated from here at SEMO.

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Cooper: Yes I did.

Corrigan: When did you graduate in SEMO?

25 Cooper: Seventy-three.

Corrigan: And you said in history. I'm just curious, what particular area of history did you like?

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Cooper: I've always been interested in history. I had some wonderful professors here. Harold Dugger was just monumental. And I took Harold Dugger for everything I could find. But I have an affinity for history. And I've always been, it's a perfect, you know, as you deal with books like that, somebody said, "How in the world did you ever do all those interviews and everything like that?" If I hadn't had a history background, that would have been lost.

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All of that information. Because who in the world would have done that much research?

Corrigan: And so the book you're talking about, so we get it on tape here, is *A Mosaic of Memories of the Alumni Merit Award Recipients, Southeast Missouri State University*. And this was published in 2011?

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Cooper: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. So that way we'll at least have it on the tape for the recording. So did you like, I'm just curious, was it 19th century history? US history? World history? Ancient history?

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Cooper: I suppose that I wanted to relate history to where I was. When I moved here, I did the first book on Louis Lorimier, the founder of the city. And one man came up to me last night and said, “Oh, are you the author of that book? I have read it and read it and read it.” And I thought it was just, I was interested in the museum.

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Corrigan: And he was, you said Louis Lorimier?

Cooper: He was the founder of this city. I’m a practical historian, if there is such a category. I deal with, I don’t see any sense in me memorizing things that I’m not going to use. I don’t want to memorize. I want to digest them where I know this.

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Corrigan: So you liked kind of like state and local, regional history?

Cooper: Yes. Yes.

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Corrigan: Is that kind of where you find yourself?

Cooper: I find—

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[End Track 6. Begin Track 7.]

Cooper: myself, but I look at the people who, I’m an information junkie. And I’ll sit sometimes and watch TV. Now I think there’s nothing better that I would like to do. After running for four weeks or something, just to sit and watch television all day and flip the channels, and go from one thing that I want to know about to the next thing that I want to know about. And it’s like, I think many people would find that boring to death. But you sit there, there’s so much now. People don’t realize what a world of information is out there.

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Corrigan: And I noticed, just as a side note, it goes along with this, though. I noticed earlier when we communicated, you were using an iPhone. So you obviously must keep up with technology.

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Cooper: I do. I blog every day.

Corrigan: Oh, you do. Okay. Because some people don’t make, as some people get older, or that come from a different generation when they remember a time before television—

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Cooper: Yeah.

Corrigan: Not everybody makes a smooth transition.

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Cooper: No.

Corrigan: Do you think you’ve always been a person who, do you kind of gravitate towards technology and interacting and you know, like you said, you can watch television now and learn something from all over the world. Have you always kind of gravitated towards that?

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Cooper: Yes. Bill Holland is the vice president here. And he said, “I will always remember coming into the first staff meeting.” When I was here. And there are two or three things that you would sit down at the staff meeting. And in development, you have to be able to read
5 people, and you have to be interested in their history. And we all had a story to tell. And so you would sit down. And he said—and then I would go back, at the end of the time, I’d come home, I’d take that computer and I’d make contact reports like mad. He said this, he said this, he said this. I mean, long. Every word. I mean, I put it in my brain. And Bill Holland said, “I don’t know what we would do if you hadn’t have done that. We’re still using
10 those because,” he said, “you’re a wonderful talker.” I said, “No, I’m not. I’m an average talker. I’m a wonderful listener.” I can see things that other people don’t see. Because I’m trained. I trained myself. It’s not me. Just get them to talk enough till you build some kind of a bridge. And they feel, it’s easy for them then to talk. They want to tell you their story. Most people do. They’ll say they don’t want to. But then you’ll never get them to shut up. You’ll
15 just be like, you can’t write it notes(??). I went out the other day with the director, athletic director and the assistant. And I think we sat down to eat. And they both got out their cell phones. And I said, “I’m going to tell you all like it,” and we were talking about a big donation that I was giving to the university. And I said, “I’m going to tell you like I told my niece and nephew last night when I paid to take them out to eat and they got out their cell
20 phones in front of me.” I said, ‘We have a new game we’re playing. It’s called Conversation. Put the cell phone away.’” And both of them, the athletic director, they put their cell phone away. I said, “Because your job as fundraiser is to remember what that person says. And if you miss one word of it, you might get by. But if you miss several sentences, you might miss something really important that holds the key to their personality and giving.”

25
Corrigan: So the key is, as you would say, in anything, whether it’s an oral history or anything, is listening is very important.

Cooper: Listening is far more important than talking. So I use that as—contact reports. I
30 mean, I have been, I’ve had to keep up with it. Because I realized that that offered me something that was much better for me than going home and sitting up writing all kinds of notes like this. And you can type so much faster than you can write.

Corrigan: Yeah. I would agree. You can type a lot faster. I had a couple of questions about
35 SEMO back in the day when you were a student.

[End Track 7. Begin Track 8.]

Cooper: Okay.
40

Corrigan: I’m just curious in general, how did you come to choose SEMO? I’m just curious. And then can you just talk about, obviously the campus has changed a lot in your years here. I’m just curious your thoughts, or some recollections from being a freshman here. Being a student. It would have been in the ‘50s. I’m just curious, what do you remember from that
45 time period that kind of sticks out in your mind?

Cooper: The first thing that I remember is that Mark Scully was the president. The brand new president. And he was a Charleston boy. And so he came in and he was very gruff. He was just a real educator. And I had met him before in high school, because he'd come back occasionally for different things. And so I was living at Leming Hall on campus, the only
5 year that I lived on campus. And he came to eat. And he asked Mabel Blue, who was our house mother, he said, "Is Jenny Cooper here?" And she said, "Yes." He said, "I want to meet her." Well, Mabel Blue was as phony as she could be. So she quickly got up and brought the whole line from the table over to meet me. Which goes over like Mother's Day at the orphanage when you're a freshman and you've got all these seniors coming around and the president wants to meet you. Not my way. So he said later, he said, "I did the most stupid
10 thing when I did that. And I looked at your face and I thought, she'd rather be anywhere than sitting right here." And the girls sitting at the table with me said, "Oh, yes, we know you're from Charleston. And your dad knows Dr. Scully." It was like brownie points galore, which I did not want. And that was the first thing. I can't tell you how intertwined my life was with
15 Mark Scully. Because I worked for him all those years. I could do something with him that other people couldn't do. Which Frank Nickell will tell you first thing that I'm telling you exactly truth. And I could get him to do if I needed it. One day, and he was very gruff. So one day I was working there and I went out and I saw the trucks loading up, maintenance were loading up all of those frescoes and statues from campus school, taking—and I jumped
20 out of the car, I ran in front of the truck and said, "What are you doing?" They said, "Well, the president told us to clean out the basement of Academic Hall. And we're taking all this stuff to the dump." I said, "No you're not!" I said, "Don't you dare leave here. I'm going in after Dr. Scully." And he was having a meeting. Nobody ever ran into his meeting. I walked, open the door, walked in. "You've got to come, Dr. Scully!" He thought something was
25 wrong with me. He came outside. He said, "Just tell them no. I didn't mean for them to do that." I said, "They won't take my word for it. I'm nothing. Come on." And so he came out and he told them, "You take every bit of that back! How dare you take that back!" Because he was really into history, too. So they tell the story out here that I saved the collection, because—just random.

30

Corrigan: And this is the collection that sits in the Great Hall there.

Cooper: Uh huh. From 1904 World's Fair.

35 Corrigan: Yeah. I just wanted to make sure we got that on the tape. So what we're talking about is life-sized statues, other types of, even larger statues, that were at the 1904 World's Fair in Saint Louis. They ended up here at Academic Hall in SEMO. Do you know how that actually happened?

40 Cooper: Yes. Now I have no verification. But this is the story that's been told here years. Louis Houck was an entrepreneur galore. And he went to the Saint Louise World's Fair, and he intended to bring something home, a collection. He didn't care what, they said. And so he had signs made up before he went. And he printed signs. And he slapped them on. And he didn't know what collection he was going to do, but he slapped it on the statuary. And it said,
45 "Sold to Southeast Missouri State Normal School." And so nobody bought that when they dismantled the, because they thought that was already—

[End Track 8. Begin Track 9.]

5 Cooper: —sold to Southeast Missouri State University. And it was, because everything else was gone. And so he paid for it and brought it home.

Corrigan: Okay. So the collection that sits out there. So that's how it came from him.

10 Cooper: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. And then do you know how you spell his last name? I was trying to figure—

15 Cooper: H-o-u-c-k. He was president of the board of regents. And he wanted this, he was a visionary. And he wanted this school to stand out. So, it did.

Corrigan: And that was, what time period are we talking about?

20 Cooper: I would say—well he had to do it. Did it stay up a year? So it would have been 1905 when he was up there.

25 Corrigan: Okay. So you eventually came back. You graduated. You came back with your husband from Carbondale. I'm just curious, you came back to Cape. Did both of you, was it strictly because Bill had a job here? Or did you guys want to return back here? I'm just curious.

Cooper: We wanted to return here.

30 Corrigan: Okay. Because some people go to a place eventually because they got a job. I didn't know if you guys initially, when at Carbondale, if you intended to come back.

Cooper: No.

35 Corrigan: You did.

Cooper: Uh huh. We wanted to come back.

Corrigan: Okay. And you've stayed here ever since.

40 Cooper: I stayed here ever since.

Corrigan: Yes.

45 Cooper: You know, we were divorced.

Corrigan: Yeah, yeah. He came back. But yes, you were, you have not left Cape since you returned back in, I guess that would have been the '60s?

Cooper: We came back in '68.

5

Corrigan: Okay. So you came back. Did you, now I know you were the director of alumni services here in SEMO. Did you always work in that area on campus?

Cooper: No.

10

Corrigan: Okay. What did you do when you first came back?

Cooper: Well, I finished my degree. And I had three children. So I had to take it slow. So when I got out of—February the 14th, 1973, I was at home. And Bill said to me, “Dr. Scully wants you to come in and see him.” And I said, “Oh, he’s probably just going to tell me some Charleston gossip.” So I go in. Seventy-three. And this is exactly the conversation. “Jane.” “Yeah.” “Hattie Eicholtz is way too old, she’d be alumni services. She’s seventy-three. You’re going to take the job.” I said, “And when am I supposed to start?” “This afternoon.” He said, “In fact, we’re going down there right now. I’ve already told her you’ll be the new alumni director.” I said, “Okay.” “You’ll be perfect. You’ll be perfect. Let’s go.” “Okay.” Walked down. I was the alumni director.

15

20

Corrigan: And you had no knowledge of that beforehand.

25

Cooper: Uh-uh.

Corrigan: Had you ever inquired about—

Cooper: No.

30

Corrigan: Had you ever thought about being the alumni director?

Cooper: No. Uh-uh.

35

Corrigan: It just happened in an afternoon?

Cooper: The next day, I called Jack Wimp, the treasurer. And I said, “Jack, you know, do I get any pay for this?” And he said, “Yeah, you’re not going to get too much, because we don’t want to put two from the same family on the payroll.”

40

Corrigan: That’s right, because your husband would have been a professor here.

Cooper: A professor. He said, “You’ll get something.” And that was it.

45

Corrigan: Okay. (laughs)

Cooper: I mean, it sounds preposterous, but it's a true story.

5 Corrigan: No, I believe you. I'm just trying to make sure we get it all here. So yeah, you didn't know a salary. You didn't know anything. You were just called in, the same connection from Charleston back in the day, years and years ago at that point.

Cooper: Mm hmm.

10 Corrigan: Were you working, you said you were raising your children. Were you working anywhere else at that time, or no?

Cooper: No. I was not working then.

15 Corrigan: So you were available.

Cooper: So I was available.

Corrigan: To start immediately.

20 Cooper: And he was, you'd think now it would not be easy. He was tough. He was really tough. I took care of him. Before, all that time, and then the last day of his life. I did his eulogy. And he was, sort of all the things sort of came together, Jeff. Because I've done lots of eulogies. I mean, I've done things like—

25 **[End Track 9. Begin Track 10.]**

Cooper: —most people don't think women do. But it just happened to me. I was a preacher's family. I finished my seminary degree after I was alumni director.

30 Corrigan: Oh, okay.

35 Cooper: And I worked on that and got my degree from Midwestern Seminary. So it was just one of those things that, somebody said the other day, said, "Oh, Mark Scully was such a male chauvinist pig." I said, "I had his power of attorney. And I did his eulogy." Now nobody can say that a person is a male chauvinist pig that has a woman for power of attorney who is not an attorney. But he trusts me. And you know, I just think I did, as I said, I did his eulogy.

40 Corrigan: And when was that?

Cooper: In—I can't remember exactly how long he's been gone.

Corrigan: Are we talking a decade or two decades?

45 Cooper: About a decade.

Corrigan: Oh, okay. Okay.

5 Cooper: He was, every president, Bill didn't have trouble with him, but every president since, they always sort of depended on me to ease the relationship with Mark Scully. Because he was fiery tempered, and he'd get mad when he read something in the paper. And you'd have to go out. "Would you calm yourself down? This is no big deal." And it goes back to being a peacemaker in my own family. I mean, circumstances put you, put all of us, we build on what we have grown up doing.

10 Corrigan: Did you have any idea at that time what your job was supposed to be, what did it mean to be alumni director, when you got in there?

15 Cooper: Not a clue. And Hattie Eicholtz was way too old for me to learn anything. I had to get in and learn it. What did they do in other schools? How do they do this? And I went into fundraising because I kept getting money. People would just give me, you know, Wehking, the woman who gave this money, she wouldn't deal with anyone but me.

20 Corrigan: At the time when you started, was that a, I mean, I know things have developed over the last several decades at most universities. But did alumni relations and fundraising, was that always together here at the university?

Cooper: No. It was not.

25 Corrigan: Okay. It wasn't.

Cooper: It kind of went that way with me.

Corrigan: Okay. It melded it. Is that how it is today? Is it kind of melded together or no?

30 Cooper: Yes. It has something to do.

Corrigan: Not the same.

35 Cooper: Not the same.

Corrigan: So when you started, how was the alumni base at the time? I mean, you had graduates, obviously. But was it a school that already had a lot of alumni who were members, or however they did it at the time here? Or was there a lot of building to do?

40 Cooper: Lots of building. And computers had just come in. Our records were in terrible shape. And (laughs) this is so stupid, I can't even say this. You got one green bar a year.

Corrigan: One what?

45 Cooper: One green bar. Which was a huge group of everybody that was a graduate. And you were supposed to take the address and write them in, if the address changed. And you only

got this one green bar. So you had to keep it. They never lasted one month. Because you tear up a green bar and it's just awful trying to get. So a part of mine was trying to put some kind of historical basis on keeping records. Who these people were. What they did. And who was worthy of being considered for our alumni merit award.

5

Corrigan: And could you tell me what is specifically, I see we have the book here. But what is an alumni merit award?

10 Cooper: That has been going on for a long time. Even before I came. It is, they used to name two people, the alumni association would name two people every year and give them, award them an alumni merit award. And it would be, they'd go through their entire membership. But they really didn't. One or two people would jump out, and that's about what they usually did.

15 Corrigan: Okay. I have a question about, and I don't have any knowledge of this, so I'm asking about when—

End Track 10. Begin Track 11.]

20 Corrigan: —dealing with alumni and development. I've always had the idea at least in my own head that, and I don't know if this is true in other things. But most people have an affinity of their alma mater. It's something very special, always, whatever school you went to. And I didn't know, and I don't know, because I don't know if you've worked in other areas. But I didn't know if it was necessarily easier to build an alumni base and donors with
25 people who have such a close personal affinity with a place, as opposed to maybe like a hospital or something, some other nonprofit that they have some type of membership and they have some type of closeness, but not necessarily a place where someone lived and learned. I don't know if you have any thoughts about that, but I've always been curious about it. Just how some people have such a fondness of their—I don't know if that's what you find,
30 or if you come across that way. I don't know. If you could just give me some of your thoughts on that.

35 Cooper: There's a commonality that draws you to a place. That's a definite. Some of them had good experiences, some of them don't. You would hope that most of them do. But even those who don't have, like you have a professor that you might have thought was the world's worst dregs of society, there's usually something for them to remember with positive feedback. So it's easy to build on. Much easier even with the space of time. Are you a member? Are you a graduate from Southeast Missouri State University? I think part of our, here in this area particularly, there's a commonality because most of us who went to school
40 here, this was the only university that we could afford to go to. And we're grateful for what we received from coming here. Because it lifted us from a level where we would have stayed, to a level where we could aspire to do something else. And I think that's the commonality as much as just the university itself.

45 Corrigan: Okay. Was it reasonably priced when you started going here?

Cooper: It was. It was.

5 Corrigan: And then how do you think, what do you think about education today? In Southeast Missouri or any institution? What do you think about? I mean, you always hear that the cost of education is just astronomical and getting worse.

10 Cooper: Yes. Yes. I think that when I started, even when I started as alumni director, you weren't beseeched with scholarships. I mean, there were people in Southeast Missouri who wouldn't under any circumstance have said, "I will take a scholarship." Because that was not their way. If they couldn't pay for it, they didn't go. So they could go there. They could scrape the money up and go. We'd provide jobs. We would help them find jobs, and they could go. So that was really a draw here. If your parents were wealthy, you could go to Mizzou.² If your parents were religious, they could go to a Baptist school, or a Methodist school. But if you had no other choice, you went here. I mean, that was the choice of when
15 there were no choices.

Corrigan: Was Mizzou, was that always considered the rich school? Just the way you said it, I wondered, is that—

20 Cooper: It was. You had to have a car to go there.

Corrigan: And I'm assuming it's easier to go there now because of the highway and interstate.

25 Cooper: Yeah.

Corrigan: Several decades I go, I imagine it was quite a task.

30 Cooper: Uh huh. And it was a long way. As I said, I was the youngest of eight kids. My dad would not want me to be so far away. I was his baby. And that was just the way we grew up. Most everybody who went from Charleston High School to college went here.

35 Corrigan: Okay. Just because of the geographic location of that, I wonder back then when you went to school, or even now, there are other large universities in other—

[End Track 11. Begin Track 12.]

40 Corrigan: —states or surrounding the Bootheel and this area that are actually close than say Mizzou or some of the other state schools. Is there an export of a lot of students, kind of from the Bootheel, do people go to Memphis and Arkansas and Tennessee and Southern Illinois? Is there—I didn't know if—

Cooper: Some do. But, Mizzou is the draw.

45 Corrigan: Okay. I didn't know just because of—this is such a large state—

² University of Missouri – Columbia.

Cooper: Yeah.

5 Corrigan: —that when you get down to this area and even further south you are so much closer to other states—

Cooper: Yes.

10 Corrigan: —than you are to the metropolitan areas of Kansas City, St. Louis, even Springfield or Columbia. That's a long drive—

Cooper: Yeah.

15 Corrigan: —versus—okay I was just curious. I know this is a big question with your thirty-plus years here, your career, but are there some little things you see as highlights of your time here. Or maybe it's your accomplishments. Or maybe buildings, or something that you really just look back and say, "You know what, that always was special."

20 Cooper: I think it allowed me to explore my own vision. Because as I looked I found it—as I looked around at people and learned people and learned as I went anyplace in southeast Missouri. Any place. I could pick up the phone and say, "Hey, I'm down in so-and-so. You want a cup of coffee? Come on down." And people would come. I had a great memory, which I don't have anymore. Like I can't do what I did before. And I could just remember names like [snaps finger]—that were just like this. And I'd pick up the phone and they'd say, 25 "How do you remember all that?" I wish I could now, but I can't. And so, as you go—as I was going into Clarkton there was a man there named Roger Rhodes. And I'd go to Clarkton and I'd think, I got to go someplace to the bathroom. You can't find anything open or anything. So I'd just go to his house and say, "Roger, can I use your bathroom?" "Yeah, come on by." And so I'd go in and Roger and I got to be the best friends in the world. And 30 they said, "We've got to have a hall of science. We have got to." So the president called, I said, "Well, I'll talk to Roger." So I go in and I mean I defied everything the way it was supposed to be done. The books say one thing, but Roger knew me from coming in to his bathroom. So I said, "Roger, I'm really down today." I said, "We've got to come up—we've got to come up with a hall of science. We have to." He said, "Well, how much is it?" And I 35 said [shrugs]. And he said, "Well, you know Ella Francis and I can do that. Go on back and tell them." And I would come in and say—they'd be just off the wall. I said, "Hey, Roger's going to do it." They said, "What are you talking about?" I said, "Yeah, he's going to do it. I asked him yesterday." And it was like "You are kidding." [pause]

40 Corrigan: Okay. So we just had a brief pause there a second. So what you were talking about is, you got a hall of science on campus here. When was that, roughly?

Cooper: Yeah. I can't remember.

45 Corrigan: Okay. But it's here, a building on campus.

Cooper: It's here. Roger Rhodes Hall of Science.

Corrigan: Was that the most, kind of, shocking thing that happened to you for probably as much money as you needed and how desperate you were?

5

Cooper: Yeah. And it was—that was the first big gift that I had. But it was the first big gift we'd gotten around here. So it was like, "Hey, maybe she should do more of this." And down here your word is really, really worth a lot. It's like, "Don't try to con me because I will not be conned." And people feel that way. Don't send somebody in who doesn't give a rip whether I live or die, and ask me for money. You send somebody in who cares and who plans to be at that funeral if I die before she does.

10

[End Track 12. Begin Track 13.]

15 Corrigan: So do you think people in this area, do they want like a straight shooter—

Cooper: Yes, exactly.

Corrigan: Just tell me as it is.

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Cooper: Don't try to fluff me up. I don't need it.

Corrigan: Okay. Do you think that's, why do you think that is? Why do you think that this kind of an area—

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Cooper: I think it's a farming area where you can go into the field with a man and say, "How much are you going to get out of this crop this year?" And he doesn't tell you from here to here. He tells you here. "That's what we're going to have. If the weather cooperates, that's what I'm going to get out of this acre." I think farmers, the culture of farming, is to cut the palaver. If I didn't have a tape, I'd say another word. But the palaver may mean more some other place. But it doesn't mean it down here. Your word is your bond.

30

Corrigan: Okay. Was your job fun?

35 Cooper: Yeah! Hilarious.

Corrigan: I mean, it seems like it can be very difficult to raise money and do that. But it also seems like you could meet a lot of people, and a lot of interesting people, who have a similar care for the institution you're at. And I just wondered if, did you ever feel like, was it always fun, or was it a chore?

40

Cooper: I think I learned the biggest lesson. And I have made this statement, I don't know how many times at conferences. In my life, I was raised at a preacher's house. And there was one thing we learned, and a lot of preacher's houses do the very same thing. Nothing is ever an imposition. There are too many people who are raised who come in and they think, what can I get out of this? And instead, we didn't care. We knew that it didn't matter how much

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we had to be imposed upon. It was not an imposition. That was what we were there for. That's the way I was an alumni director. People could come wherever I was. If they needed to spend the night, I had beds. If they needed to eat a meal, I have it. If they needed to call and say, "I can't get anybody up on the academic to answer my phone call," "Okay, I'll get in my car and I'll go up there. And I'll call you in 15 minutes. Give me your number." 5 Nothing is ever an imposition.

Corrigan: I had on my list here of things to ask you about this book here that you did. And I was asking you earlier about this other book on the university's athletic hall of fame. But you 10 said that book's finished.

Cooper: Mm hmm. That's finished.

Corrigan: When did you finish that? 15

Cooper: Just about three months ago.

Corrigan: Oh, okay. And is it out now?

Cooper: Oh, yeah. It's out. 20

Corrigan: Oh, it is. Okay. So was 2012 the copyright?

Cooper: Mm hmm. 25

Corrigan: Okay. And what's the actual title of it?

Cooper: *Athletic Hall of Fame, Southeast Missouri State University.*

Corrigan: Okay. Did you like writing these books? 30

Cooper: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Do you think the history background was helpful to kind of compile it? 35

Cooper: Definitely.

Corrigan: Okay. Was that helpful, I guess, in anything, to look at, I guess you would have talked to a wide variety of ages of alumni and to kind of know what was going on at that 40 decade, at that time in the US, in Southeast Missouri, in SEMO. That had to be helpful to have great conversations with people.

Cooper: Mm hmm. And when you do that, most of those, if they're not before my time, I 45 knew them personally. I don't think there are many of them that I didn't know, maybe five or six that I didn't know personally.

Corrigan: Okay.

5 Cooper: So it's an easy book to write. But then you get ready to do the interviews, and they all say, "No, I'm not going to let you interview me. I'm not talking to you." "Well, if you don't talk to me, I'll talk to your kids." Or, "I'll talk to so and so." And they, "Okay, all right."

10 Corrigan: I want to switch gears a little bit. We're still doing good on time. And I'm just curious about, so you do have politics in your family, or politicians that have come out of your family. Your sister, at least. I'm wondering, were your parents—

[End Track 13. Begin Track 14.]

15 Corrigan: —politically active? You mentioned just briefly your father was the head of the Charleston—

Cooper: Republican Party.

20 Corrigan: Republican Party. Did you guys talk about politics a lot as a family?

25 Cooper: We liked, I mean, we stayed up with the news. Radio was, I got—(laughs) my sophomore year, I can't tell you the exact date. But we got our first television in my sophomore year in high school. And we only, we finally, Cape came in as a station, that's when we could get something besides white snow. So I couldn't believe television, the effect that television had. Because we knew the radio schedule like mad, and we would listen to the radio. Daddy really liked Eisenhower. But he didn't know anything about getting out the vote and things like that. We didn't have enough. I mean, there were Republicans in Mississippi County and there were Democrats, and they went to the polls and they voted. I don't remember all this other stuff. Daddy was not popular like that. And he never endorsed any candidate that I know of, because he was a preacher there. So he stayed kind of clear out of that. My mother never, I mean, I don't have any clue who she ever voted for. She thought politics was not her thing.

35 Corrigan: Okay.

Cooper: And, but we didn't really get into politics until Warren ran.

40 Corrigan: And it seems like, especially since your father was involved in that, do you think he, since Warren did, and he knew he was going to sign up as a Democrat, or thought he would, did your father care either way?

Cooper: No. He didn't care which party he ran in. He was just interested in Warren's intellect, and for him to have this experience.

45 Corrigan: Had Warren shown any interest in politics? Or why did your dad think that he was the man?

Cooper: His dad, Warren's dad, Shorty(??) Hearnese, ran for public office. I mean, he was an office holder. So he thought it was just perfect.

5 Corrigan: But your father felt that.

Cooper: My father felt that.

Corrigan: Yes.

10

Cooper: Uh huh.

Corrigan: Okay. Was your father that tied to the Republican Party if he could support Warren on the Democrat?

15

Cooper: No.

Corrigan: Didn't matter?

20

Cooper: My dad, he was for his children.

Corrigan: Okay. So he never really talked about politics much.

Cooper: Uh-uh.

25

Corrigan: Okay. I just wondered how he becomes the head of the party, or if it was one of those things where they needed somebody to be the head of the party, and—

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Cooper: Oh, no. Warren had his inauguration. Daddy was getting up in years. Because he was 40 when I was born. So he was getting up in years by the time this came. And he had a stroke the day after Warren was inaugurated.

Corrigan: For governor.

35

Cooper: For governor. Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Okay. But before that, Warren had been—

Cooper: Secretary of state and everything.

40

Corrigan: Everything. Okay. I'm just curious, did you ever help with the campaign? I mean, you were kind of young.

45

Cooper: Not with the representatives. Because I was not really living there. And I really did not help with, occasionally if I was at home and they wanted me to work the crowd, I worked the crowd. But did I have a—

Corrigan: You weren't stuffing envelopes or—

Cooper: Uh-uh. Uh-uh.

5

Corrigan: Okay. What about the rest of your family? Was it a family affair to support Warren and Betty in politics?

10 Cooper: When Warren ran for governor, we got serious. And all of us, I mean, you couldn't have asked for a family to do this anymore than we did. Whatever it took.

Corrigan: So he was secretary of state at the time.

Cooper: Yeah. He was secretary of state.

15

Corrigan: What did you think when he, did you think it was, I mean, I guess at what point in Warren's political career, did you have any inkling that he's going to be governor?

20 Cooper: When he told me that he was going to run for governor—now you have to realize that I was nine years old when they married. So Warren was my, I mean, we said everything ugly to each other that we possibly could say all the time. And he said that he was thinking about running for governor. And I said, "Yeah, I'm thinking about running for president of the United States, but neither one of us are going to get it." (laughter) And it was just banter, you know. When he was governor, he used to, Floyd Warmann, who was his—

25

[End Track 14. Begin Track 15.]

30 Cooper: —chief assistant, and he said, "Oh, we all laugh. We just grab your letters that come to Warren. And we pass them around and we holler laughing." Because it's like, "You stupid fool, why did you do this?" And I said, "Warren, do you know they read my letters to you?" He said, "Well, what's wrong with that?" I said, "I don't want them knowing what I have said!"

35 Corrigan: How old were you when he was governor?

Cooper: Well, let's see, '64 and '68.

Corrigan: Okay. So you would have been—

40 Cooper: We were back here in town.

Corrigan: That's right. So you would have been out of college and you would have been working here. So you were an adult at this time.

45 Cooper: Uh huh.

Corrigan: Yeah, that's right. Okay. When did you actually realize he was going to be governor?

5 Cooper: When things started shaping up and the polls, I looked at the polls. And I thought, you know, the fool could do it. And I thought, and he can work it. Because he has that down to earth, what he says, he says. And the rest of the state will be glad to know somebody who says something, says something. I mean, he didn't blabber. I was with him one night—I think I was there. But I know Betty was there—when this woman came up to him at a political rally and she said, “Oh, Governor.” He was governor. And she said, “Oh, Governor. I baked 10 you a blueberry pie.” And Warren, the fool, said, “I don't like blueberry pies.” And Betty was there. And she ran over, “I love blueberry pies!” I mean, you don't say stuff like that. But he did. And he would constantly. He said, he was just, every place that I would go with, we went to see, we took our kids everywhere to see all these historical things. And every time we'd see a postcard with a cemetery on it, I would send one to Warren and say, “Wish 15 you were here.” (laughter) And I mean, he had a collection of “wish you were here” cemeteries. And he was such a fun joker. I mean, there's nothing we wouldn't do to each other. And when he died, it just nearly killed me, because he was just the light of my life. The last thing he did, well, this picture is one of the last things he did. When I retired—

20 Corrigan: And this is a, while we're on the tape, this is a picture of who, now? Who's in the picture?

Cooper: This is my seventieth birthday. And Warren, his birthday was the next day. And Betty. And so we had, when I retired here, he was no more able to come than the man in the moon. No. He was just not able to come. And he hadn't left the house in quite some time. 25 And he said, “I'm going.” And they said, “You can't, Warren. You can't go.” He said, “I'm going. She'd rather me be there than any of you. And I'm going.” So he comes in. Well, half the people have not ever seen him. I mean, they don't know anything. They just know him by reputation. And I said to him, I said, “Well, my brother-in-law's here.” I had to make this talk. And I said, “My brother-in-law's here today.” I said, “He's been my brother-in-law, 30 unfortunately, since I was nine years old.” And said, “We've never said a kind word to each other in all these years. But you know, he just tore my brain apart because he just stayed on me and demoralized me and everything else.” And I just went on a terrible talking about him. I said, “Warren, just stand there, and you tell everyone what you have called me every day of my life.” And he stood up and he said, “Dirty Neck!” I said, “Can you imagine someone who 35 calls you Dirty Neck who's the governor of the state? Look what I've had to deal with.” And he was just screaming laughing. And so many people have said to me since, “You know, that's the only vision that I have of him. Even though he was in the history books. But he said, “I just see him standing up that day, knowing that, you could look at him and tell that he could not make it long.” And said, “It was just a scream.” So I'm really grateful for that little glimpse—

[End Track 15. Begin Track 16]

45 Cooper: —that they had of who he truly was. Instead of a name somewhere. And he was really fun.

Corrigan: With your brother-in-law, obviously your sister was there. At some point you had to realize that if he was going to get elected governor, she was going to be in the governor's mansion as the first lady.

5

Cooper: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: Did you guys go up to visit often?

10

Cooper: Yeah. We did.

Corrigan: Did you take the kids?

Cooper: And we took the kids.

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Corrigan: Because that had to be an experience for children. And especially because the trip itself for young kids, to make it up there.

20

Cooper: And their daughter Julie was a few months older than my son Mark. And they had grown up together. Because there was always somebody who had to stay at home and babysit with all these kids while we were out. So that was just part of it. Nobody paid any attention to who was there, just like who was going to take care of the kids while we were gone.

25

Corrigan: Now I know when somebody's the governor, they have a lot of responsibilities. Was access a problem? I mean, they were far away, distant, both your sister, your brother-in-law. I don't remember how many children they had.

Cooper: Three.

30

Corrigan: Okay. Your nieces or nephews. Did they lead such a busy life, were you able to still be in good touch with them?

35

Cooper: Yes, and very normal. You establish a different kind of normalcy. But you learn to depend on not everyday normalcy. But holidays. You'd spend your time thinking—and we all had the same commonality of, we had to talk about Mama. She was ill. We had to talk. As long as family, as parents are there, there's a unity there that every family's going to talk about. So it doesn't matter if you're a governor or if you're a street cleaner or if you don't have a job. Those questions go on.

40

Corrigan: Now I'm just curious about your opinion about your sister Betty. I mean, she was the first lady. And you know the governor, when he was no longer governor, did you ever think that she would come back down here and run for office—

Cooper: Yeah.

45

Corrigan: —before she did? Oh, you did?

Cooper: Yeah.

Corrigan: Because I think she's the only first lady to do that.

5

Cooper: She had a taste of something else. I think it's safe to say that she was not as content to go back to Charleston as Warren was. Warren really, in whatsoever state he was, he was there to be content. That's biblical, but that's as close to being biblical as he'll ever get. But he was fine. He was content with where he was. Didn't make any difference what it was. She was not. The things that she did well, which was singing, church choirs and everything, she did not find that kind of—she could be a representative and go up here, come to Jefferson City, and still meet with her group in the church choir every week. You know, she could go singing with them on Wednesday night prayer service. She could visit. She liked Jefferson City. She was here eight years. First two-term governor. And so eight years takes a lot out of you and makes you attuned to a different kind of life. But he was fine.

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15

Corrigan: Were your parents alive at the time she became representative?

Cooper: My dad died just about a month after Warren became governor. He had a stroke at Jefferson City and they took him to Houston. And he died down there.

20

Corrigan: Okay.

Cooper: About a month later.

25

Corrigan: And what about your mother? When did she pass away?

Cooper: And my mother, she died when she was ninety-two. And Warren and Betty were home by then. And they'd been home a long time.

30

Corrigan: Okay. And had she been a representative already?

Cooper: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

35

Corrigan: What do you think your dad would have thought out of all the children, would he have ever pictured Betty as a politician?

[End Track 16. Begin Track 17.]

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Cooper: I don't know. That was kind of a different world for him, because women, he didn't think of women as, he wasn't a chauvinist, but he just didn't, women hadn't come that far yet in his mind. So I don't know what he'd have said. I know he would have encouraged whatever we did.

45

Corrigan: Because it seems like he definitely valued education for all of you.

Cooper: Yeah, he did. Uh huh. He did. And it was very, and he would read Carl Sandburg's *Life of Lincoln* every year. He was very interested in politics that way. He was a voracious reader. And so I think he would have been fine with it.

5 Corrigan: Did anybody else in your family, any of you or your siblings, ever run for office or consider running for office?

Cooper: Uh-uh.

10 Corrigan: Not even a school board or something?

Cooper: No. Well, Velna was on the school board. But the rest of us, I never had any desire. I had a job that was bigger than I was, and I wanted to do it well.

15 Corrigan: Okay. I was just curious. And that would have been a lot of politics in one family.

Cooper: But there is, it would be stupid for me to say that there's not politics in my husband being elected president of the university. Because there's a lot of politics there.

20 Corrigan: Mm hmm. Yeah, politics can be outside of Jefferson City, or outside of a school board. Politics, you're right, can be found anywhere.

Cooper: So getting the position, keeping the position and doing the position all require politics.

25

Corrigan: Mm hmm. That makes sense. Okay. I had a question, you already answered. Well, so Warren and Betty are Democrats, or ran that party.

Cooper: Mm hmm.

30

Corrigan: I guess, did you have a strong affiliation either way?

Cooper: Yeah. I was president of the Democratic Women here.

35 Corrigan: Okay. Here in Cape?

Cooper: In Cape. Mm hmm.

40 Corrigan: Can you talk about, just, did the Democrats have a stronghold here? Or was it Republicans that had a stronghold here?

45 Cooper: Now, my sister who lived here, Jennie Cooper, was married to Bill Frye, who was an attorney, and Republican as Republican could be. And so we learned, Steve Limbaugh and I were laughing about this the other day. Because down here, you better be able to deal with Republican or Democrat. I mean, I think Steve Limbaugh and his dad and Bradshaws and all the big Republicans here, I've always been good friends with all of them, because

they're alums and they're friends. And I didn't do a whole lot of, I didn't do any of trying to like for instance that Jason Kraus spoke at my retirement. And he said—he was a Republican senator, and he said, "There's never been any kind of, she has never run any kind of a partisan office. Never any kind." And I thought, Warren told me afterwards, he said, "That was a fine compliment. But I'd have made it partisan." (laughter) But I had to work, I had to really concentrate on not being partisan. Because they knew I was partisan.

10 Corrigan: Yes. I guess that would be difficult. Because I would think, just anytime throughout Warren's career, that people knew who he was and knew who you were. And I just wonder if they, well, she's a Democrat.

15 Cooper: Yeah. And they'll say that now. They'll say something about, "Yeah, she's a Democrat." Because you bear those labels. But they'll turn right around and say, "Yeah, she's Baptist, too." Well, you know, who knows. You carry your labels.

20 Corrigan: Okay. Because I just, when you get a name in a family, like any governor in the state of Missouri, it's not going to be unknown that you know, he's a Democrat. And if you're the president of the Democrats Women's Club or whatever, that you're a Democrat. But it didn't matter here in your job, it didn't matter. But it was all just alumni of SEMO. Are there Republicans and Democrats down here in Southeast Missouri, did everybody work across the borders like you? Or is it definitely—

[End Track 17. Begin Track 18.]

25 Corrigan: —a stronghold on either side?

Cooper: There are strongholds on both sides.

30 Corrigan: Whether it be here, or all the way from here to Charleston.

35 Cooper: Yeah. But you have to, you can't live in just your own partisan world here. Because there are going to be office holders that are not with you. And if you want to play that game, you'll be in trouble. Democratic women and Republican women work together in some things. You reach across the aisles, even though there's no aisle. And I think part of it, if I had anything to say about politics today, with all the mess in Congress, and the poor totals that they're getting, you know, we've always had people who are partisan. We've always had to work with people that are partisan. But you knew who those people were that you could trust. And what they said, if their word was bond, you took it that way. There was nothing wrong in my estimation for somebody to say, "I disagree with you on that." Fine. You didn't come the same way I did. There's nothing wrong with somebody disagreeing with you. It's just what I could never take is for somebody to say, "Well, that's right. I agree with you." And then find out they were leading the pledge in another situation. And I think, why didn't you just have the guts to say, "I'm against you."

45 Corrigan: And that's part of that, you were talking about earlier, the farming community, the straight shooter.

Cooper: Yeah.

Corrigan: If you're against me, that's okay. Just tell me. Is that what you're saying?

5

Cooper: Uh huh. Just tell me. Because you're just as entitled to your position as I am mine. But don't try to muddy the issue. And don't tell me something that's not true.

Corrigan: Now this collection, the oral history collection at the society, there's this political collection I told you about. And Betty and Warren are already in it. Warren's actually in it twice. And almost all of those were done by my predecessor two removed, or whatever. And there were a lot of interviews done down here. From here, well from even Saint Genevieve all the way to Sikeston and New Madrid County and Shannon County and Carter County and all those counties there. And I noticed, I had to listen to a lot of them for a different project.

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And I noticed when it came to Democratic politics, there was like a common name that always came up, and it was always J.V. Conran as an older politician who's been dead decades.

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Cooper: Mm hmm. Yeah. I knew him, but I did not know him well.

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Corrigan: Oh, you did know him.

Cooper: I knew his daughter, though.

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Corrigan: I think she's in the collection too. What is her name?

Cooper: I can't, name is eluding me. They lived here for a time.

Corrigan: Here in Cape?

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Cooper: Mm hmm. I'll think of this at midnight, but I'm not going to call you.

Corrigan: That's okay. I think, she's in the collection, too. I know she is, because she's given some letters of his or something. I've seen a couple of letters.

35

Cooper: Now, Hal Hunter I was very close to, I was close to. And J.V. and Hal were close.

Corrigan: Okay. Hal Hunter's in the collection, too. He was, I think, interviewed in the '90s. I think J.V. Conran had already passed well before the time this project started. And I think that's why Will Sarvis, who was the oral historian at the time, was trying to find a lot about him. Because he was known as the Democrat politician in—

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Cooper: Mm hmm. You had to go on bended knee and ask for his support. They used to say that. They said, "Get ready to bend your knee, because you'll go for J.V."

45

Corrigan: Well I guess was he the political boss or machine? Or just the respected leader?
How do you describe him?

5 Cooper: I really, I remember him. I was a little bit intimidated by him. I think his time was coming to an end, he was getting up in years by the time that we came along for this position. And Hal was doing more of the work, the actual bending of the knee, than J.V. was. But at the time, he held New Madrid. Now that, he did. His influence did not extend to as many other counties as some people would think. Because it never extended to Mississippi County.

10 **[End Track 18. Begin Track 19.]**

Cooper: But New Madrid he ran with a fine-toothed comb.

Corrigan: Okay. Was he around when Warren—

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Cooper: When he first started. But Warren dealt more with Hal than he did with J.V.

Corrigan: Okay. So Warren, did he have to go on, as you said, the bended knee?

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Cooper: I don't think so. I think Hal was more there. And Hal had a different approach. Same result, in some cases.

Corrigan: Because he's in the collection, too. I've seen, I don't remember his, he's in the collection. I remember his name, though. So he was still around when Warren and Betty were campaigning, but that was kind of towards the end of his—

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Cooper: Yeah. Of his realm, if you want to put that word there.

Corrigan: Okay. Okay. Because Warren was the young, up and coming—

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Cooper: Whipper snapper.

Corrigan: Young, up and coming Democrat. So I didn't know, since he was so well known down here that I've read, and then Warren was from down here and was a Democrat, I just wondered if that, if he had his support, or—

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Cooper: Well, what people do is they make the mistake of saying "the Bootheel," and they include Charleston, Mississippi County, in the Bootheel. Mississippi County is not in the Bootheel. And the Bootheel is more southern. It's New Madrid County and the counties just to its south. And Charleston, Mississippi County never considers themselves a part of the Bootheel.

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Corrigan: Okay. Yeah, well, and you just said, and I don't know if I remember that or have heard that before, but you just said that he was really more New Madrid County. Mississippi County, Charleston, that was a different county, different politics. So maybe you're right. I

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think maybe there is probably, or was, the idea that his realm, as you said, maybe was a lot larger than people thought.

5 Cooper: Yes, that's right.

Corrigan: But you think it was much more--

Cooper: I think it was very confined.

10 Corrigan: Confined. Oh, okay. Okay. Are you still, you're retired now.

Cooper: I am.

Corrigan: But you seem to be very active still.

15

Cooper: I am.

20 Corrigan: Could you tell me a little bit about, we've still got a little bit of time here, since you retired, what do you do to keep busy? What do you, I know we were at an event just last night that you attended for the hundredth anniversary of the Missouri state flag. There are several events going on right now with the State Historical Society and Stephen Limbaugh and different entities here, and the Missouri Conference on History. So we had that event last night.

25 Cooper: Mm hmm.

Corrigan: And you have another event tonight, in just a few hours.

Cooper: I do.

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Corrigan: Oh, that's right. So one of the things I know you're on, because you have this event tonight, so you're on, if I say it correctly, the Governor's Mansion—

Cooper: Missouri Mansion Preservation.

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Corrigan: Okay. Thank you. And what do you guys do?

40 Cooper: When I went on, Gary Rust is the editor of the paper here. And he thought it would just be great if I would go on it. Because I had some sense of the mansion. And since I've been on it, that could be good or bad. Because in the first place, most every time that I'm doing something like this, I'm going to figure out if this is the way I would do it. If it's not, I'm going to press for change. The thing that has bothered me about the Missouri Mansion Preservation, and during the eight years that Betty and Warren were there, I was up there often. But people never seem to think that that was the mansion for the state. You went in.
45 You went to a party here. And then you could go out. And it wasn't yours. You're just a visitor. It didn't matter how much you went. If you go to the Christmas parties for the next

twelve years, you'll still feel like a visitor. And so my idea was that the Missouri Mansion should be leading all the other houses, distinguished houses all through, and say, I'm one house and I want to congratulate somebody for keeping this next house going.

5 Corrigan: Throughout the state.

Cooper: Throughout the state. For keeping our history alive.

10 Corrigan: So what's the actual purpose of the Missouri Mansion Preservation Committee? Is it to physically preserve the structure? And does it need a lot of that? Or is it more like what you're saying can have a broader mission or—

15 Cooper: We're examining what the purpose of the mission is. And when it was started by Mrs. Bond, it was fundraising, they thought. We'd get this, we take care of the furnishings. We do this, and we'd take care of this. Well, people saw it in a different light.

[End Track 19. Begin Track 20.]

20 Cooper: They thought because she did a very good job of her work of setting up a Missouri Mansion Preservation Foundation. But it became all the rich Republicans and the lobbyists are on it. And that's a designation that they've tried hard to avoid. Because there's so much more that should be done, in our estimation. But nobody said to them, "Let's expand our vision and let's also raise visibility throughout the state." Because there are people here all over this state who keep history in historical associations and never get an ounce of
25 recognition. And they're there every day, keeping that house open. So why don't we move these into every area of our state where there's any history at all, let's raise the visibility and work toward having a day when we praise everybody at the mansion. We have every historical association that wants to come. We have every person who has written a book on state history. And actually look at the people who really do the constant work. And like here.
30 I think I'm on every committee down here about, from all this, I don't do doodly squat. I mean, I just am a figurehead for many of these. But there are some people who work every day. And I think, those are the people, the uncrowned people, who keep history alive. And if we don't do something for them, they're going to die and no one is going to take their job for doing it. It's just like these books. Did I want to do those? Did I have nothing else to do? If I
35 didn't do it, it wouldn't have been done. Because I know those people. And every year, we lose people, lose a part of our history that we're not willing to invest in.

40 Corrigan: What other types of organizations, or how are you spending your retirement? Busy, but how do you spend your retirement?

45 Cooper: I do what I want to do. I like, I pick and choose what I want to do. I find I can get, I can decide better and spend more time when I was working fulltime, you just have a certain amount of time. And you can't do everything 100 percent. If you do, you're crazy. You'll never have any sleeping time. I have kids. I have three kids. I have grandchildren. I want to spend time with them. I want them to know, my kids, one of the things I did was I did all my funeral plans. And I thought, I'm going to get all that done and everything, they won't have

to do a thing. I even wrote the obituary. Even though the funeral home said you did not, you wrote three lines and handed it in. And I said, “Well, that’s enough. That’s all I care about.” So they had, my kids said, when we went down to plan the funeral, they said, it’s got to be at First Baptist Church in Charleston. Because I was born, my daddy was pastor there. And services up here. And I said, “Okay. Now let’s talk about preacher.” And they said, “No, you’re through planning.” And I said, “Really? I thought I was paying for this deal.” And they said, “No, you’re not going to do it. There are going to be three speakers, and they’re going to be your children. Your three children.” They said, “Every other place in the world we’ve had to go sit and listen to people who didn’t know you like we know you, talk about you. We’re not going to do it at your funeral. We’re going to stand up and say, all of us are going to say, ‘The most important thing in her life was being a mother.’ And we want everybody to leave this church for one time in their life saying, ‘Her children knew her better than anybody else. And that was her main mission in her life.’” And I said, “Hey, fine with me.” But I think—

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[End Track 20. Begin Track 21.]

Cooper: —you have to decide what your main mission is going to be, that you don’t, not just for a huge segment of your life, but for every year. Your life changes. You’re not who you were. Warren was so sick, I thought, I need to be here. So I went down and stayed with him. And I was the night nurse. And my voice is just like Betty’s. So he didn’t know the difference. So I talked to him, you know, at night. And I thought, then she can go get some rest. Well, I stayed down there, ended up staying six months. And I came back, Lynn, their oldest daughter, was supposed to come in and relieve me for one weekend. And I got up to the hill at gravel road there. I saw this car out in the, had gone off the road. And I looked over there and I knew it was Lynn. And she was dead. And the sheriff was screaming at me, “Lady, go on! Lady, go on!” And finally he said, “Why won’t you move?” I said, “That is my niece out there in that field. And I can’t move. I’m sorry.” And he said, “Identify yourself.” And I told him who I was. And he said, “Will you go back with me to tell Betty?” And you talk about a crushing, crushing blow. You can’t imagine. And I went back. I had to walk in that house and tell her. Three months after her husband had died. And then I stayed till she had a stroke. So it’s, again, it’s you don’t know what your life is going to be like. And so you just, you think that it’s going to be from here to here, and you’re going to have fifty years to live. It’s never that. The segments are just more concise than you ever thought of. And I find that in most people. They just don’t think about that like that. So that’s where I am. A segment is more concise. And I will do what is sent to me to do, that I feel compelled to do.

Corrigan: Now we have about nine minutes left. We’re right on time. We’re good. I want to make sure I get you out of here at three o’clock. You have a party at four. Is there anything else, we’ve covered a lot, and I don’t know what you thought, this kind of came together quickly. But were there any stories or things or topics that we didn’t cover that you thought we would or we should have? Or is there anything we’ve left out—you know, we’ve left out a lot of history, I understand that. But I didn’t know if there was anything pressing that we missed.

45

5 Cooper: One thing that you would be reluctant to bring up to me, but I'd sort of like to have it there, is going through a divorce as a college president's wife. It was a very difficult time. And staying up, not as much that, I went to Charleston and stayed a number of months with my mother. But coming back, finding the courage to come back to the same job with him still being here. And working for a year.

Corrigan: So he was the president still while you were divorced. I'm just trying to understand.

10 Cooper: Uh huh.

Corrigan: For one year you overlapped?

15 Cooper: Yeah. And gossip was everywhere. Because he was, there was another woman or two involved. And gossip was everywhere. And every day, driving up, when I think of Southeast in the last years—I don't do this so much now—but driving up here to this job every day—

20 Corrigan: From your home or from—

Cooper: From my home in Cape, where I live now. I would say to myself, you have the strength to do this, you have the strength to do this. But nobody really knows ever how much strength that takes to come and, because what happened during that time, even your very best friends, what they wanted to do was to get rid—

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[End Track 21. Begin Track 22.]

30 Cooper: —of both of us, so that they could go on and not be embarrassed. Now they would not admit that. Very few people would admit that. But it was like, okay, let him go on. But you know, it would be good for her not to be here for the new president, too. Even though the work, my work, I don't think they ever quibbled about that. But it's just this—I'm not making myself very clear—but it's just like okay, would it be easier if she went, too? And then they had to come around to say, "Well, she can't leave." But that wasn't momentary. That took time for them to get there. And when you deal with one's even short span of life, you have to

35 deal with that, the bad things and the good things. So it, people in academia don't know how to deal with, you know, in politics, you'd just be fired. You know, "You're through." But they don't do that in academia. So that was a problem.

40 Corrigan: Was that a while—

Cooper: That was in 1990.

Corrigan: Nineteen-ninety, okay.

45 Cooper: Yeah.

Corrigan: So you've been at the university quite a long time since then.

Cooper: I have. Twenty years.

5 Corrigan: Because you retired in what year, 2009, is that right?

Cooper: Yeah, 2009. And then I stayed on for, they wanted me to stay on as director of development. And I stayed on as director of development for a while.

10 Corrigan: Okay. But now are you retired from everything?

Cooper: I'm retired from everything.

Corrigan: Okay. Officially now. But you find yourself back here a lot.

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Cooper: I do. I find myself back here a lot. I didn't at first, because I was down in Charleston for six months. And I never came back.

Corrigan: Okay. Taking care of Warren, or Betty.

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Cooper: Betty. And all of them. Even though I maintained my house—

Corrigan: Okay. You were just gone.

25 Cooper: I was just down there. Because it was the thing to do.

Corrigan: Okay. And you still live here in Cape, correct?

Cooper: I do. Mm hmm.

30

Corrigan: So now when you're totally retired at the university, when you come back, is it a different kind of enjoyment for things?

35 Cooper: Yes. You know, if you work here like I have for thirty years, people know what they can say to you and what they can't. They know me, I know them. You very seldom go anyplace around here, or you don't go out to eat that somebody doesn't come over to the table—my friends hate it when people come to, alums come up to the table all the time. You can be having anything, and they will come up. "I just saw you sitting over there!" And just pull up a chair. And my friends hate it.

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Corrigan: What about your children?

45 Cooper: My children are used to it. And they're not going to say a word. They were raised in the house on campus. And so they know that nothing is an imposition. I taught them well, the same thing.

Corrigan: Because I would think that that would have to run through a lot of things. I would think that if you would have been out to dinner with Betty or Warren, or either of them, that people would have come up to those tables, too.

5 Cooper: They would have. They did.

Corrigan: And they would have come up to them. And if alumni come up to you, did you ever get used to it? Or it was always part of the game.

10 Cooper: It never even bothered me. I didn't know that it didn't happen to other people. Because it's always been part of my existence.

Corrigan: But it bothers your friends.

15 Cooper: But it bothers my friends because, they're getting more used to it. But the people who did not associate with me as much—and I'm out there every day. I mean, I go out to eat lunch and I go out to eat dinner. And they're just like, (groans), "Here they go." You know, that's part of it.

20 Corrigan: That's good. Okay. Thank you. Well, I mean, we're right on time.

Cooper: Okay. Good.

25 Corrigan: I think we're good. I mean, I think I got you a minute left. But I appreciate you pulling this together, and able to make the time when I came to—

[End Track 22. Begin Track 23.]

30 Corrigan: —Cape. And I appreciate it, and I appreciate your story. I think this will be a great addition to the collection. I think it will definitely add some stuff to our collection about SEMO, Southeast Missouri in general, Mississippi County, Cape Girardeau County. I think this will all be good. We have a lot of histories in this area. But so many of them are so politically focused. And I think this will be a different type of, a different side, maybe, to your family, your upbringing, SEMO. Just a more, different background, different variety of
35 information. So I think this is great. So again, thank you for taking your two hours—

Cooper: Oh, yeah.

40 Corrigan: —out of your time. Especially since you have a party to throw for the next two hours. So I'm going to go ahead and shut off the recorder. But thank you again.

[End Track 23. End Interview.]