

An Interview with
Pat Whitaker

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PREFACE

The interview was filmed using a Canon XH A1S A camera on a 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, Josephine Sporleder.

**THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

NOVEMBER 1, 2013

PAT WHITAKER INTERVIEWED BY BLANCHE TOUHILL

Blanche Touhill: Would you introduce yourself?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, I'm Pat Whitaker, and presently I'm chairman of Arcturis, which is an architectural design firm.

Blanche Touhill: Where did you grow up, you know, your mother and father, your brothers and sisters? When you went to elementary or secondary school, did a teacher influence you, or—talk about your childhood.

Pat Whitaker: Well, my father was an officer in the Army, and so we moved around a lot until I was in the 8th grade. So I don't have one teacher who influenced me. I think it was probably several, and I can't come up with one single name. But I grew up in a family of five girls, me being the oldest, and my father was a real macho sort of military guy, and I often say to people, "If I'd have had [sic] a brother, I think I would've been totally different," but I just didn't realize girls couldn't do the same things that boys did, because we did all of that stuff as I grew up. And we lived in France and we lived in Japan and a couple places in the United States before that. And the last place, from 8th grade until—and my mother still lives there—is Ohio, in Dayton, Ohio. So I went to Ohio State University, and I went there for two years, and then I transferred to a school in New York, which was called Tobe-Coburn, which was a retail management school, and that's where I graduated from. So my first job was actually as...

Blanche Touhill: Let me go back a little: How did this moving around affect you?

Pat Whitaker: Well, since I was a kid, I didn't really know any different, so we kind of learned how to make friends pretty fast, and in some cases, we lived on a military base or a military post, so those people were also people who moved around a lot. So you kind of went with the flow. I think little kids are pretty flexible. I think I was lucky in that when I went to junior high

and high school, I didn't move around at that point. That's when we stayed.

Blanche Touhill: And did you learn a language at any time along the way?

Pat Whitaker: Well, I used to be able to speak French pretty well because I was a little kid when we were in France and, I need to go back and study French again, and I can speak a little bit. I mean, I can get by, not as well as I probably should be able to after having lived there, but I was like, from eight to ten years old.

Blanche Touhill: Well, in high school, were you a joiner?

Pat Whitaker: I joined a few things. I don't think I was really that much of a leader in high school. I don't think that came until later. I was actually kind of shy when I was in high school, and I don't think that had anything to do with being a girl particularly. I think I was just shy. I was kind of a late developer. I was always real skinny, and I was kind of conscious of how too skinny I was in high school.

Blanche Touhill: When you say that your father—did he take you to ball games, or did he play ball with you?

Pat Whitaker: Oh, yeah, he played ball with us. We were all swimmers. He was one of the people who monitored the swimming meets all the time so he was really into sports and we were too, and we didn't think of the boy/girl thing particularly in sports. My dad was a really good baseball player. He actually played on a farm team right before World War II, and then he got drafted. He was, like, 18 or so.

Blanche Touhill: And so he stayed in?

Pat Whitaker: He stayed in for 20 years, yeah, and then he came out and worked for the civil service at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Blanche Touhill: So he was the Air Force?

Pat Whitaker: No, he was actually the Army, and he was a liaison officer between the Army and the Air Force, and then he got out and he was in the civil service.

Blanche Touhill: How did you like Dayton?

Pat Whitaker: I liked it. I didn't go back there after college. I lived in Columbus for a while, and then I've actually been in St. Louis since I was in my middle 20s, so I sort of feel like this is my home.

Blanche Touhill: When you were in college, why did you choose retailing?

Pat Whitaker: That's a good question. I think I was always interested in fashion, and I knew the school that I went to in New York—I was always planning to go to that one once I started college because I knew that was the best one for that particular profession—but ironically, once I became a buyer for a store, I got a little bored with it, because it's a little more methodical than you might think, and that's when I got interested in interior design. So by then I was in St. Louis and I took some classes at Wash U School of Architecture, because I knew I needed to know that. And then I also took some classes—or a couple of summers, I went to the Graduate School of Design at Harvard. Those were just, like, summer courses, but they were great because they were how to run a design firm. And those were fab—there's somebody who really influenced me.

Blanche Touhill: Well, talk about that.

Pat Whitaker: Well, I met a—he's actually a consultant to design firms. His name is Hugh Hochburn, and he consults to them all over the country, so he knows what every design firm in the country's doing as far as running their business, and management-wise, and what the trends are, and how to run a business, because most architects and designers don't really know how to do that, and it is, after all, a business. So he has these roundtables where you only meet—like, I'm the only one from St. Louis who runs a firm who's at this roundtable. The idea is that they're non-competing firms, so they're only the people who run the firm, and we meet a couple times a year, and we have an agenda that we go over. And I was always surprised to learn their problems were the same as mine. And some of them were further ahead in their careers than you were, and so you just kind of bounced the ideas off, and they went, "Oh, yeah, we had this problem and here's what we did about it."

Blanche Touhill: That is very helpful.

Pat Whitaker: It's very helpful. It's like a real condensed education, like, overnight and it's great. And then you have these relationships with these people that

you can call on and compare notes and sometimes do joint venture projects with.

Blanche Touhill: And how many are in this group, about?

Pat Whitaker: There are about 15.

Blanche Touhill: And it's the same 15?

Pat Whitaker: Well, now it isn't but when it first started, it was, and, of course, I was the only woman. They were all men. That didn't actually bother me too much.

Blanche Touhill: Did it bother them?

Pat Whitaker: Well, now there are women in it, too, so it's kind of changed a little bit, because I've been in that group for, like, 20 years. So now there are men and women in it.

Blanche Touhill: How did you happen to come to St. Louis?

Pat Whitaker: Well, my husband at the time went to law school at Wash U, and we got divorced after he got out of law school. Well, it happens to a lot of people [laughter].

Blanche Touhill: But when you came, where did you work?

Pat Whitaker: When I came, I worked at Stix, Baer, and Fuller. Do you remember that?

Blanche Touhill: Oh, I do, yes.

Pat Whitaker: They had an interior design department, and they kept wanting me to go back into retail, because they knew that's what I'd done, and I really wanted to do design, so they let me do that. And then after I worked there a while, then I was getting divorced, and I thought, "I can't make enough money to support these kids." They were, like, in kindergarten and I couldn't—that was when they wouldn't let you leave, no matter what—so I thought, "If I had my own business, I could leave whenever I wanted. I might not make as much money, but I could do that." And I hated to ask people for time off. That was just my thing. And so I started my own business, and I think part of my luck was that I didn't know that you could really fail at it. It wasn't an option for me.

Blanche Touhill: When you started, you were no longer shy?

Pat Whitaker: I'm still shy. It was kind of hard for me to overcome, and how it started was—because when I was at Stix, we were doing residential, and then this one woman said, "Would you do my husband's office? He needs some help with that." And I liked that a lot better, because he wanted you to come in and do it and leave, and with houses, it never ends, you know, for anybody. That's even true of my own. You're always doing something. And so that's how it started to grow.

Blanche Touhill: Did you take any of your customers from Stix into your private business?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, there was one client of mine that I was helping her with her house when I left, and so she wanted me to still help, and we still used the Stix furniture and stuff, but then when I started my own business, I didn't sell furniture any longer. I just did it as a consultant.

Blanche Touhill: So you go in and what do you do for a house, let's say, for a house? What do you do for a house?

Pat Whitaker: Well, now we don't do anything, but then, you'd come in and it's like, well, this woman had bought a new house that was under construction, and so we talked about how the rooms should flow, how the lighting should be, the furniture, and it has to be their house, not mine, so it's different every time and it's kind of hard when you have a husband and wife, because they don't always think alike. So I was kind of glad to get out of the residential actually.

Blanche Touhill: And go into all...

Pat Whitaker: Into the commercial, right.

Blanche Touhill: Well now, did you call your company...

Pat Whitaker: No, this was in 1977, and I actually called it Interior Space Inc. And it was that from 1977 to 1999. And the reason that we changed is, we'd been doing architecture since the '80s in addition to interiors, but everybody said, "Well, your name doesn't go with that," so we did a poll of our clients and said, "We're thinking of changing our name. Do you think we should or shouldn't?" so half of them said yes and half of them said no. So we decided we're just going to change it, and we needed to do it before the millennium, and so we all just came up with—we got in a

room and we looked up wor[ds]—I didn't want my name. A lot of architects use their name. I didn't want my name on it. I just thought it'd be better for the future if it had a name. So we actually made up the name. There's a star named Arcturus, but it's spelled differently, and there's a magazine in Sweden we found out, but we were able to use that name. So we changed it.

Blanche Touhill: When you started, were you just all by yourself?

Pat Whitaker: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: And your business was in your home?

Pat Whitaker: It was only in my home for about six months, and then I rented this little office in Clayton. It was, like, \$100 a month, and I just moved furniture from my house in there. Then it was really easy because that was before computers. Now, if you start the business, you have to have computers, and all these software programs, and so on and so forth. You could still do it. It didn't take any money at that time, which I didn't have anyway.

Blanche Touhill: Did you have a lawyer?

Pat Whitaker: I guess I did, because I knew I had to send the name into Jeff City, so I think it was, like, a friend of mine. He helped me. Yeah, that's true, I did have a lawyer. Actually, it was Jerry Pratter, now that I—do you remember Jerry? Anyway...

Blanche Touhill: When you started the business then, how did you get other business? Because what you're known for is to be able to build businesses.

Pat Whitaker: Right, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: What was your approach?

Pat Whitaker: Well, the very start of the commercial business was doing doctors' and dentists' offices which were growing up and down Ballas Road at the time, and then Team Four asked us if we would—then I had two people by then—if we would get involved in the Wainwright State Office Building, because they didn't have any interiors people. And that was a huge project. It was 200,000 square feet. And so I worked with their architects as a consultant to them, and we did that project. It was for the State of Missouri, and it went very slowly, because the state doesn't

move that fast, so I learned how to do those big projects. And I thought, "Wow! These are much more lucrative than doing lots of small ones." So I asked the Team Four guys, I said, "Let's go call on these other corporations now and show them this work that we've done and see if we can get some more work," and they said, "We don't do interiors," so I asked them if they cared if I did, and they said no. So then we talked to Monsanto and Southwestern Bell and it was—at the time, that was the beginning of commercial interior design, which I didn't actually know. I don't think anybody knew—as a separate thing, separate from furniture dealers who did it to sell furniture, and separate from architectural firms, so on its own. Does that make sense to you?

Blanche Touhill: Yes, it does. Perfect sense.

Pat Whitaker: So Southwestern Bell was one of our clients and that was, like, late '70s, early '80s and then came the divestiture of AT&T and all of the sudden they needed to be physically divested also. So they just dumped huge amounts of work on us and other firms also that were like ours. And that just made us grow, like, 100% a year. So we kept calling on other corporations, and then we branched out into higher ed, just a little bit of other things. And we just worked really hard at keeping our clients and understanding them and listening to them and making sure we designed things in their image and kept up with them. And that's really how we've grown.

Blanche Touhill: Now, you have how many people working for you today?

Pat Whitaker: Now we have 50.

Blanche Touhill: And you started really with yourself, and then slowly began to add two more and then...

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, and then as we added another discipline like architecture—when we first added the architects, we were just doing renovation work, because we needed our drawings sealed and we kept going outside and we said, "Well, let's get our own architects, and they can seal the drawings." Well, then, when they came, they said, "Well, we want to do ground-up buildings too," and we're like, "Okay, we'll go out and see if we can help," so that's how that part started. And then we added planning also, land planning, landscape planning and design.

Blanche Touhill: Well, now, when you began to go in a larger scale, how did you control the workforce that you needed? Did you hire people for that project, or did you just hire them and say, "If we keep the business, you'll stay," and if you don't keep the business—because contracts come and contracts go...

Pat Whitaker: Contracts come and go, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: ...and I would think that one of the secrets of your success is that you always have a workforce that's employed.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, because it's really hard to just have people come in for a project and keep the quality level where you need to. That's one of the good things about, if you work for an Edward Jones or a Monsanto or a Wells Fargo that we work for: They always have something going on. Now, they'll expand and contract, you know, the size of the projects and so on, but that makes it a little bit easier than if it's just one here, one there, one there, which we still do some of that but we do a lot with the major clients that we know are going to have projects. It just depends on who's going to get it, and if you do a good enough job, then you have a good chance of getting that other project with them.

[background conversation]

Blanche Touhill: When you want to talk about bringing people in and out or hiring people, what kind of people do you hire?

Pat Whitaker: Well, it depends on where the need is. Like, we have meetings every week where we figure out everybody's time for the week and then we have long-term scheduling, too, which is for a couple of months. So we figure it out based on the contract we have. Like, if it's interiors or if it's architecture or if it's planning, we just plan that out. That's the only way to do it, and it's more of an art than a science, because you're never right. Like I say, there's always 20% of the projects that are coming in that we don't see, and there's always a big percent that go on hold that, for whatever reason with the company or the organization, that you just don't know are going on hold; like, for funding or because their business went down or something like that. So it's a constant guessing and updating game of the people that you have and the projects that you see coming in.

Blanche Touhill: So it's timing, too?

Pat Whitaker: Oh, yeah, it's definitely timing. Definitely timing.

Blanche Touhill: How did you get most of your business: by just being out and about, or by starting with the—if you worked for the big companies, do they then help you get other jobs?

Pat Whitaker: You have to talk to the people who could hire you, the facilities people, so one of the first organizations that I joined was called International Facilities Management Association, and that's all our clients who belong to it, or potential clients, and so I worked on their program committee, so you got to know them, so then, when a project came up, they would at least entertain giving you a request for proposal. You might not always get them all, but they know you, and they feel like they know your firm. People want to work with who they know and who they like and who they feel like they have a relationship with, even though it could be a competitive bid for fee, they still want to know that. I remember, I had one of our competitors ask me one time, "Why do you belong to all these organizations and stuff?" I go, "Oh, I just—something to do," and I thought, "This is the best thing," and it's also, we've always been really big at giving back to the community, and I think you get it back ten-fold in all kinds of different ways and business is one of them.

Blanche Touhill: Talk about how you came out of your shell then, because even though you're still shy—and I can understand that—you're talking about yourself as a little girl who was skinny, and you lived under a bell jar, because you did travel with your family and you went...but at some point, you put a number of steps in front of you and just started to grow.

Pat Whitaker: Well, that's a good question, Blanche. I think I just always knew, if it didn't work, if the business didn't work, I'd have to go get a job and I think fear is a big motivator. I'm a procrastinator so I would put stuff off—calling this person because I didn't want to call them and maybe get rejected—until I just felt like I had to. So I still don't think I've overcome my shyness. It might not seem that way, but to me it is.

Blanche Touhill: Talk about your relationship with architects, because that was really one of your strengths.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, because architects and interiors people always have this little adversarial relationship going on, this push and pull, and ours is pretty good that we have with our architects, but we have our issues. We have our issues with them, but when we design a building, we design it from the inside out. That's our philosophy, because we say the inside of the building is, after all, what it's going to be used for, and a traditional architectural firm tends to be more concerned with the outside. And the outside, to us, is the shell, and that has to look good, and we've won a bunch of design awards for our exterior architecture, too, but we are really conscious about that inside-out design, and so when we put a team together for a project, we make sure an interiors person is there from the very beginning, so that the column spacing and the core can be designed so that the building's really efficient. You know all those buildings on Highway 40 with real severe angles; you can't put anything in them? We would never do one like that, because it has to be practical as well.

Blanche Touhill: People talk to me about those buildings, and there was one that was going to be put up on this campus, and I thought about—and I don't know who I had heard about it, that you can't put the furniture in; it just becomes space that is just there.

Pat Whitaker: And you can put something in there but it's afterthought stuff, and you want it to be efficient. It has to be functional first.

Blanche Touhill: Have other architectural firms now linked with interior designers?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, other ones have interior designers, but they—well, this is my opinion of how they operate—they have them because they want them to pick the colors and the finishes. We want ours in there to do that also, but to make sure that the space works for the person. We think that the space should support—and I'm talking about the function of the space—should support whatever's going on in there. So it's part of your business productivity, your organizational productivity, how that's done. Like now, you know how everything is getting really open, and we have these collaboration places, because everybody knows that creativity happens accidentally a lot, so you want to make it possible for those accidents to happen. So we put big coffee bars, that's where you do your copying and printing and reproduction stuff and it really does work. All the big companies are doing that now, and we see it even in higher ed, more and more.

Blanche Touhill: Let me just say that, how do you keep ahead of what's coming?

Pat Whitaker: Well, we go to all the—like, NeoCon, which is the national furniture show in Chicago every year. We make sure that we go to that every year and all the major furniture brands that do commercial work, they have all these research people that study how people work and how they interact and all the different effects. Like, for instance, to me, one of the most amazing things is the need that people have for natural light. And they've done all these studies. Even Wal-Mart has done studies: if there's natural light, that side of the store sells more; in schools, the kids who have access to natural light do better; and so it's so important to not block it off.

Blanche Touhill: Well, here's my question: I remember the days of the open classroom, and then, as soon as that trend was over, they began to put up walls, and then, of course, the ventilation doesn't work, the heating and cooling doesn't work, and all of that. I remember the days when we began to put up cubicles, and now you're saying to me the cubicles are coming down.

Pat Whitaker: Yes.

Blanche Touhill: So, your answer to my question is—how do you keep ahead?—is you are involved nationally, and you look into the research at the moment of how the American is thinking.

Pat Whitaker: We do. And European.

Blanche Touhill: And European?

Pat Whitaker: Well, because they tend to be a little ahead of us, believe it or not. And technology. Don't let me forget to add that, technology and how people use technology today has had a huge influence, as you know, on all of that: business, education, the whole thing.

Blanche Touhill: How do you find out what's going on in Europe?

Pat Whitaker: The same way, different seminars that we go to. And it doesn't necessarily mean it's going to work here, and then there's talking about it to your clients, because everybody has a different agenda. Like, a CEO has a whole different agenda than the facility person that we work with. That's always our hardest thing, is to tell that CEO, "You don't need to go to all the meetings or anything but let us check in with you at all these

different phases of a project to make sure we're on track," and they always tweak it, which we need that; we need their influence. These guys are sometimes scared to talk to those guys.

Blanche Touhill: Your other reputation is that you're flexible.

Pat Whitaker: Mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: And so I assume that means that other architects and engineers and interior designers are not as flexible?

Pat Whitaker: Well, yeah, obviously I can't speak to them. I don't know how they do their business. What we say is that we make a big deal out of controlling our egos so that it is your space, your thing and not ours. That's really hard to do. You have to be, like, this super listener of your client. We spend a ton of time on the programming part that's before we draw anything on a piece of paper, and we have these questions that we go through, kind of like what you're doing now, so that you really understand what their business is, and what can we do to support that in this design? We feel that good design is really important and it makes good business. You know, it's not just, okay, put the furniture in there; paint the wall blue, stuff like that.

Blanche Touhill: What the answer to my question is, is how did you transition from being a little shy girl to being—well, your business is huge now, isn't it? How big is your...

Pat Whitaker: We have 50 people. It's not that big.

Blanche Touhill: But you have a niche that is...

Pat Whitaker: I think we have a niche, yeah. I mean, we have plenty of competition in our niche, too. I think we do have a niche, and I think we're really good at keeping our clients, and that's a big thing. A lot of firms don't spend as much time working on that. It's much harder to get a new client than to keep an existing one. I mean, it takes a lot more time to do that than somebody who already knows you and is comfortable working with you and knows you're going to take care of them.

Blanche Touhill: Are you glad that you went the route you did?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, I am glad I went the route I did, and it's funny because hindsight, of course, the 20/20 hindsight, I think I was lucky a little bit too, the timing part and everything.

Blanche Touhill: Why do you say that?

Pat Whitaker: Because the industry that I was getting in was in its infancy, which I didn't really know that, and now it's kind of grown. I'm sort of glad that I did my time slot and not the next one, because I think taking a company to really a mature level is harder than being an entrepreneur. For me, it would be.

Blanche Touhill: But you did take the company to the next level, didn't you?

Pat Whitaker: Well, I took it to where it is now, and now Traci O'Bryan, who's our president, is taking it to the next level.

Blanche Touhill: So she's going to be bigger; it's going to be bigger?

Pat Whitaker: Well, I don't know. I don't know, because you know, this last recession was really difficult for us.

Blanche Touhill: Yes. Well, for anyone in the building...

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, anyone, yeah, and it's really good now, but it's taken a long time to come out of that and recover, so I guess we should feel lucky we're still there.

Blanche Touhill: Did you find rejection because you were a woman as you were going around town looking for jobs?

Pat Whitaker: You know, I actually didn't. What I found was, if you were a woman, because it was unusual, they would actually talk to you because they wanted to see what you had to say. It didn't mean you got the job, but it meant you could get in to see them, and then if you could prove that you could do a good job—I found people to be pretty fair actually.

Blanche Touhill: That they were interested in the quality work.

Pat Whitaker: They were interested in the quality work, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: Did your children go into the business?

Pat Whitaker: No, I have two. One's in Los Angeles, works for a creative artist agency, and my son's here looking for a job.

Blanche Touhill: Talk about the International Women's Forum. How did you get attracted to that?

Pat Whitaker: Well, of course, I always knew about it, and Joanne Griffin asked me to join several years ago, and, of course, I was really flattered that she did, and it's just an absolutely fabulous group of women and now I do the dine-arounds, as you probably know, which is kind of fun, because it's really easy. Everybody volunteers to do it and has them, and it's a great networking thing. A lot of our clients belong. I've met some new friends. I love the fact that you meet people from all these walks of life, different people that you know who they are but you didn't really get a chance to interact with them on that kind of a social, intimate level that you do there.

Blanche Touhill: Have you ever gone to any of their meetings?

Pat Whitaker: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: You have?

Pat Whitaker: You mean...

Blanche Touhill: Their national meetings?

Pat Whitaker: Oh, no, I haven't gone to the national meetings...

Blanche Touhill: Or their international meetings.

Pat Whitaker: Sorry; I thought you meant...No. It's in Vancouver, or it was.

Blanche Touhill: This year, it was, in October.

Pat Whitaker: No, and I'd like to do that sometime. Have you done that?

Blanche Touhill: No, but I know that there are people that have done it. If you had been born 50 years earlier, what would have happened to your life, do you think?

Pat Whitaker: Well, I wonder if it would be like my mother's. My mother didn't work. I don't think I would have been very happy, to not be involved in things, and maybe I would have figured out a way, I don't know, but I think it would have been a lot harder. I guess I would've been marching along with the people wanting to get a vote and stuff like that. I think those

people were the real trailblazers and we were just maybe the first ones in something else, but they were the ones that had to just march to get their rights. So I wouldn't have been too happy 50 years ago.

Blanche Touhill: Was your grandmother or your mother happy?

Pat Whitaker: I don't think my mother was too happy, and my mother is 96. I think she's still not that happy. I think she got less happy as she got older, and my mother actually thinks that I'm really weird [laughter]. She actually was the other way: "Well, you can't really do that," and I'm like, "Well, yeah!" "You can't buy that house," and I said, "Yeah, I did, Mom, and I paid for it already." "What? Oh." You know.

Blanche Touhill: Well, she was living in her world.

Pat Whitaker: She was living in her world, yeah, and I kind of realize that, but you sort of find out after a while, then, you just don't tell them anything.

Blanche Touhill: Well, then, what happened to your sisters? Are they entrepreneurs?

Pat Whitaker: No. I have one sister who was a[n] airline stewardess who's retired now—but they're all younger than me, just a little. There are 10 years between the five of us—and one who was also a buyer in a store for a long time and then she got married and had kids and stopped, and I have one who's a nurse, and another one who's a social worker. So they all worked for part of the time. They didn't work their whole life like I did.

Blanche Touhill: No, but they worked in traditional female roles.

Pat Whitaker: Well, that's true, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: You're the first one that really...

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, that's true, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: ...broke out of that.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, I guess it's kind of unusual that they didn't do—yeah. I don't know why that is.

Blanche Touhill: Did you begin to join organizations as a way to get business or are you a joiner?

Pat Whitaker: You know, I actually joined the—IFMA, I did join because I knew that was good, but all the other ones that really don't have anything to do with the industry—somebody asked me to join one, like, in the early '80s and it was the United Nations Board. Remember when they had that here? And so I said, "Okay, I'll..." You know, because I was really interested in that anyway, and so I did join it, and that was the first one that I joined, and then [laughter] after I was there for a while, they wanted me to be the president of the organization, the chair of the board, and I said, "Why do you guys want me to do that?" and they said, "Because you're the only one that's not controversial." [laughter] There were a lot of real heavy personalities on that board and they wanted somebody to be able to get through the board meeting. And so I liked doing that, too. Anyway, and then from that organization, then people ask you to join other ones, and then I started—I didn't actually think of it in terms of business at first, and then later, we're like, "Oh, yeah, this is great because I know so-and-so and he's getting ready to do a project and maybe we can talk to him about it."

Blanche Touhill: So it was really, a friend said, "Come" ...

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, exactly.

Blanche Touhill: And it was the foreign United Nations...

Pat Whitaker: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: And you had had foreign experience?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: How did your father look upon your progression?

Pat Whitaker: I think he was happy about it and he just died in March so I've had him a long time, but actually, I remember showing my father my stock portfolio one time that I was really proud of, and he looked at it and I don't think he was, because I had more money than he did—not that I had that much—but, you know, so I didn't show him anymore after that. That was kind of crushing for me.

Blanche Touhill: Because he had his girls, but he looked upon them as a nurse or a social worker...

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, I guess so, but he didn't...

Blanche Touhill: ...or a mother?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: Or in retail?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, exactly.

Blanche Touhill: Retail would be a woman's world.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, it's more of a woman's world, especially for the fashion part of it, yeah, which I still like that part. It's fun, but I just didn't want to stay in.

Blanche Touhill: Well, you've had a wonderful life.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, but I've had some divorces [laughter], but I was the one that wanted to leave so, you know...

Blanche Touhill: It was the modern American world.

Pat Whitaker: I guess so, but those were the men who were not supportive, were my two ex-husbands. Isn't that funny?

Blanche Touhill: But they knew what you were when they married you?

Pat Whitaker: They did. When my husband got out of law school, he wanted me to quit working, and I said, "Well, I'm not going to quit working," and it just went, whoa, downhill from there.

Blanche Touhill: What year was that, roughly?

Pat Whitaker: That was 1976. That was when we got divorced, '76.

Blanche Touhill: And when you married the second time, didn't he know that you had a business?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, he knew, yeah. He did know. He just felt really threatened, which was total shock to me, you know, that he felt threatened. I thought he'd think it was great, because now we have two incomes, but I had my two kids from my first marriage, and they went through this bad teenage drug stuff and everything, and he couldn't handle that. And I kind of don't really blame him for that, but they were my kids so I was [unintelligible].

Look, I—he kicked my one kid out of the house when I was gone, and I said, “Ah, that’s it.” But now I have a great husband that I’ve had for...

Blanche Touhill:

You do.

Pat Whitaker:

Yeah, so...

Blanche Touhill:

And what does he do?

Pat Whitaker:

He ran Corizon Medical Services, which is a big company that sells doctors’ and nurses’ services to prisons all around the country. So it’s like a two billion dollar company, so it’s really huge. We have...

Blanche Touhill:

Did he start that?

Pat Whitaker:

No, he didn’t start it, but he was there for 20-something years, and he’s the CEO of that company.

Blanche Touhill:

And they sell services?

Pat Whitaker:

Yeah, they just sell services to prisons.

Blanche Touhill:

Like what? What kind of services?

Pat Whitaker:

Doctors and nurses, so they do prison healthcare, and they do the State of Missouri, you know? Yeah. It’s a huge business. It’s just gigantic, and now he’s chairman of the board. He retired, like a year ago, but he chairs their board.

Blanche Touhill:

And you’ve retired really?

Pat Whitaker:

Well, I still work three days a week, but I’m not running the firm. Traci’s running the firm. I help them do marketing and business development. And introduce them to people.

Blanche Touhill:

And you’re going to stay at that for a while?

Pat Whitaker:

Yeah, and I’m going to do that for a while, but it’s kind of fun to be on this side of it, even though you don’t agree with everything they’re doing—and somebody told me, “You better not stay there because you’re going to disagree with everything they do,” and I don’t disagree with everything, but some things. But they’re getting it and now we have five women who are stockholders, and we don’t have any men. We didn’t really plan it that way. That’s just how it is now, and I think we’re getting

ready to have another man join the stockholders group. He's been with us for, like, 20 years.

Blanche Touhill: So, the stockholders group were people who were running the business?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, they were and they still do, yeah. They all are active in the business, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: And that's why they're invested, because it's their responsibility to keep it going?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. It's theirs and they're doing it. They are getting out there, and they're all different ages. One of them is 35—35 to 50, I guess their ages are.

Blanche Touhill: Do you find it's easy to deal with men and women?

Pat Whitaker: I don't think it's a difference. What I've found is, it's the personality of the person. It isn't if they're a woman or if they're a man that they are going to act positively or negatively towards you. But sometimes when we meet a client, we go, "Oh, this guy needs to have a man work with him." We kind of psychoanalyze people and then we send a man because if we think this person is anti-woman or anti-man, we send the other one. We're not always right about it.

Blanche Touhill: Did you have fun building the business?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah. I had fun with most of it, and then you have your ups and downs, and those are never fun and the people part's the hardest. You were talking about that earlier, but it's always the hardest if you have to fire somebody. Whether they deserve it or not, it's still really, really difficult, and if you have to lay people off, like when there's a recession—because we have had a couple times where we've had to do that—and that's really difficult because it's not fair to the person, but we don't have a choice. And when we do that, we always send them to the classes that help you with your résumé and finding another job, but it's still unpleasant.

Blanche Touhill: Do you like architecture?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, I just love it. I just love good design, and I don't understand how people don't—some don't understand the impact that it has on

something. All they have to do, whether you like Frank Gehry's work or not, is look at the impact his work has had, like, the first one he did in Bilbao, put that Spanish city on the map. It changes everything if the design's really good.

Blanche Touhill: Well, the Arch put St. Louis—well, I mean, St. Louis was always on the map, but the Arch helped to keep it on the map.

Pat Whitaker: Yes! The Arch, exactly. That's a perfect example.

Blanche Touhill: Have you been to Bilbao?

Pat Whitaker: No, I'm embarrassed to say. I've been to his building in Los Angeles.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, the theater?

Pat Whitaker: The theater, yeah, which I think is...

Blanche Touhill: That has a lot of space that's sort of...

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, that's true.

Blanche Touhill: It needed your help. It needed your help.

Pat Whitaker: You could say that, yeah. You could say that.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah. And I've been to Bilbao, too.

Pat Whitaker: Oh, have you? Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: The same thing.

Pat Whitaker: Oh, is it really?

Blanche Touhill: Yeah.

Pat Whitaker: It's not quite...okay.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah, there would be triangles that you'd say...

Pat Whitaker: Have you seen Daniel Libeskind's museum in Berlin?

Blanche Touhill: No.

Pat Whitaker: He did a Holocaust museum which is great.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, I have seen it.

- Pat Whitaker: It's like the building kind of...
- Blanche Touhill: Did you go to that one?
- Pat Whitaker: Yes, I thought it was fabulous, and I thought it made you feel—the building made you feel like, oh, this was such a horrible thing.
- Blanche Touhill: And the space inside.
- Pat Whitaker: Yeah, and the space inside, yeah. It was, like, jagged, but it got the point across, I thought.
- Blanche Touhill: Do you travel much?
- Pat Whitaker: Well, Dick had back surgery, so we haven't been traveling too much, but yeah, we do. We used to go once a year to Europe or somewhere or Africa or South America just for, like, a week or two.
- Blanche Touhill: When people with your eye go in a room, do you say to yourself, "I could make this room more [inaudible]"?
- Pat Whitaker: Yeah, we notice the stuff that we think doesn't work, and a lot of times it has to do with light, and usually it has to do with too much, there's too much stuff or it's too broken up or something.
- Blanche Touhill: Do you say anything?
- [##### LEFT OFF HERE, about 43:00 #####]
- Pat Whitaker: Well, I have to be kind of careful about that. You don't want to offend people, and if they're not going to change, they're not going to change, sometimes. But we always feel like it's our job to bring it up: "Okay, here's the ideal way that you could do this. Here's what it'll do for you," but if they're like, "Nope, we're not doing that," and sometimes they do that. Like, we just finished an accounting firm, and they told us they wanted it to be this open, collaborative space, but yet they wanted to put all these people in offices, and they want to block off the light around the perimeter of the building, and we're like, "Okay, do you still want this open, collaborative space? Because you can't have both of these things and still meet this goal of this open, light, collaborative space." So we say, "These are your choices, the trade-offs."
- Blanche Touhill: Do you want to say what they chose?

- Pat Whitaker: They chose the offices, this firm, yeah.
- Blanche Touhill: What has caused this move toward collaboration and light?
- Pat Whitaker: I think it's the realization that it works. I mean, IBM did all these studies because they want these people to come up with all these ideas, and ideas and creativity comes from people bouncing off of each other, not from sitting in your office by yourself, so they want that inspiration to happen. And it doesn't mean everything has to be totally—you know, some people go the extreme other way so everybody's got to kind of do it so that it sort of works for them for whatever their business is.
- Blanche Touhill: Is it more than that? Is it that the society feels they have to solve problems together these days?
- Pat Whitaker: Yeah, and the younger people especially do, like this firm that I was just telling you about, all the young people didn't really want the offices. The older people—it was an accounting firm—the older accountants, they go, "Oh, I've got to give this guy an office because he had an office," and I'm like, "Well, actually, you really don't." If you give him an efficient workspace that they can work in and then you have a place to go for really privacy, lots of little places that are small, it works, and people adjust, but the idea of the change, people don't like that. The idea that I'm going to lose my office, I can't handle, but then when I'm actually out there, if I have everything I need to do my work and a private space to go to, because I might want to make a call I don't want anybody hearing, even though I know they can't really hear my distinct—my words.
- Blanche Touhill: Well, I've seen that more in the medical profession, that they're trying to form teams.
- Pat Whitaker: Yeah.
- Blanche Touhill: And I'm just thinking to myself, what is it in the American society that is bringing us out of offices and that we want to be together, but I don't know whether that's the recession, that we gather more together, that we take walls down because we have to cooperate?
- Pat Whitaker: Well, I think it was happening even before that, yeah, and students do it, too. We did this building for Wash U, their "Cupples II" building, and the students would walk in—this is before the renovation—they're sitting all

over the floor in the hall, and I'm like, "We need to give them a place to sit," and so they did. They did that, and they made these huge 10-foot-wide corridors and places for them to gather and all that kind of stuff.

Blanche Touhill: So Washington U listened to what the students were saying, too?

Pat Whitaker: They did. I mean, they still have classrooms...

Blanche Touhill: They had focus groups. Oh no, I...

Pat Whitaker: ...and all that. All the practical stuff, but they also have that collaboration.

Blanche Touhill: What's your favorite or couple of favorite projects that you've done, that you really are proud of?

Pat Whitaker: Well, one that I'm really proud of is this building we did for Grace Hill, which is in North St. Louis. It's a Grace Hill Health Center. It's a new ground-up building.

Blanche Touhill: Where is it? Sorry.

Pat Whitaker: It's right on Florissant, you know where the water tower is up there?

Blanche Touhill: Yes, of course.

Pat Whitaker: Okay, it's right—because it's called Grace Hill Water Tower Health Center, and it's a new building.

Blanche Touhill: Is it on Grand, or it's on Florissant?

Pat Whitaker: It's on Florissant. I hope I got the address right.

Blanche Touhill: But it spirals off the water tower?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, it's right near where the water—I'll send you the address, because I...

Blanche Touhill: No, no, I know roughly where that is.

Pat Whitaker: But it's the first new building that was built in this neighborhood, which is a really bad neighborhood, in a hundred years. And now it's a couple of years old—and this is why I'm proud—Well, I'm proud of it because it won a design award, but I'm also proud of it because they've kept it really nice. The building looks really great. They use it for community things. They had a big debate about how many windows they should do, because

they said, "Oh, these windows get broken," and all this stuff, and they're like, "No, we want people to be able to see in here and see what it is," and so they put the windows in, and it's worked out really well for them so far. So we feel like we made a...

Blanche Touhill: Did they put in a glass that wouldn't break easily?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, it's not bullet-proof or anything but it's...yeah, but it is.

Blanche Touhill: No, I understand, but if somebody threw a rock or something, it would not shatter?

Pat Whitaker: I guess it depends on how hard they threw the rock...

Blanche Touhill: Well, that's true. That's true.

Pat Whitaker: But, yeah, so it really works for them, and the number of people that the health center sees increased by 30% when they had that. They had another space before that was just an old building.

Blanche Touhill: So when you're in, you can also look out?

Pat Whitaker: You can look out, right, exactly.

Blanche Touhill: And it's collaborative?

Pat Whitaker: And it's collaborative, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: So you can see where you have to go.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, it's collaborative. The nurses' station which is in the middle of the building, is a great big, huge open station. They have doctors' little—the operatories around there, and so on. But it really does work for them.

Blanche Touhill: Does it have a parking lot?

Pat Whitaker: Mm-hmm, it has a surface parking lot, small one. And, of course, the Edward Jones projects, we're really proud of those, too, that we did all up and down 270.

Blanche Touhill: Oh, I did not know you did those.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, we did all those, yeah. All those at once, yeah. That was a lot.

Blanche Touhill: That was just incredible, the way they bought that one building and then, all of a sudden, put up the others.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, they put them up all at the same time, and they got them done just in time for their growth. And the one building, the one on Manchester, is a building addition, because they wouldn't let us build a new building. That was Des Peres, but we found out you could build an addition, so we build this 250,000 square foot addition on the building, and they let us do that. And that's their headquarters building.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, and that has that beautiful lobby.

Pat Whitaker: That has that beautiful lobby, yeah, and that was another thing where they would not let us put a sign outside the building, a very big one, so we put the sign inside the lobby, but it's huge, and that's why that glass goes all the way up the atrium and you see it at night so it's a big—for them, it's like, "Here's our brand," and it's very emphatic.

Blanche Touhill: How many years did that take you?

Pat Whitaker: That one took a long time. It was, like, four years in planning and zoning. It kept going round because neighbors were all upset and all that kind of stuff. I think they're all okay now, but you have to go through that a lot.

Blanche Touhill: Do you have trouble with those groups?

Pat Whitaker: Sure. We're doing Wydown Middle School right now [laughter], and there we had the school board, the teachers, the City of Clayton, and the neighbors. And, boy, they were just—their board meetings went till 10 or 11 at night and—We're the architects, we're like, "Okay..." Anyway, I think they're okay now. There's still a few neighbors. They think the neighborhood's going to go down the drain. I don't know why they think that, but they do. But the school's going to be great, and this is one where we...

Blanche Touhill: And what is unique about it or why do you say it's going to be great?

Pat Whitaker: Well, part of it is because, in the programming phase, we did a big programming day with the kids, the actual—and they're, like, little kids, some of them, and they had some great ideas, and they wanted it natural and light and open. It's amazing, the stuff that gets through to these kids, and there's a lot of natural light there. You'll see that in the classrooms

and all the way down the middle, there's this big—what do they call it—“Main Street” where the cafeteria is. Right now there's a huge auditorium that's under construction, because it had to be phased. School had to be going on the whole time so we could build it, and then we built this side and they could go over here, and then in the summer, there was this big push to get it done before school started again in August.

Blanche Touhill: How many seats are there in the auditorium?

Pat Whitaker: I should know that. I think it's only, like, 150. Let me find out, though, because I'm not really working on that one, so I'm not sure.

Blanche Touhill: It's interesting how they do schools but they have regular classrooms. They don't have the open classroom notion.

Pat Whitaker: They have some open and some not. Some are open on the second floor. They have some that are kind of open, labs and things.

Blanche Touhill: And what subject will be in there?

Pat Whitaker: I think that's a lab, one of the science classes, a lab.

Blanche Touhill: Well, I always liked architecture, but I never wanted to be an architect, but I always admire...

Pat Whitaker: I know you do, because [unintelligible 52:42] Touhill down there, yeah. That's great. I know, I remember when you chose him. I thought that was such a coup, to get a world class architect like that. And you know who we're doing work with now? You know Gyo Obata? He's not at HOK anymore. Did you know that?

Blanche Touhill: No, I did not.

Pat Whitaker: I know! Somebody told me to call him, and I did. I said, “Yeah, so we're going...” We'll see if we get something. He's in his own class.

Blanche Touhill: Well, he was the first master planner for this campus.

Pat Whitaker: Oh, was he really? Okay.

Blanche Touhill: And he did his second master plan as well.

Pat Whitaker: Okay.

- Blanche Touhill: So he knows the campus very, very well.
- Pat Whitaker: Yeah, and he's like sharp as a tack, and he just wants to work. He just likes working so much. So we're going after a couple of projects with him, so we'll see what happens, yeah.
- Blanche Touhill: Well, he's worldwide.
- Pat Whitaker: He's worldwide, I know. I'm like, what? If I were HOK, I wouldn't let him out the door! You know? [laughter]
- Blanche Touhill: You may be in some other foreign country doing a job with him.
- Pat Whitaker: Yeah, yeah. I know, I just think he's great.
- Blanche Touhill: You may enter the foreign business.
- Pat Whitaker: Yeah [laughter].
- Blanche Touhill: Well, I'm back to the idea: How did you grow so and be in architecture when architects are so proprietary, I guess I should say, to think that a firm is really led by an interior designer...
- Pat Whitaker: And a non-architect. I'm not an architect, yeah.
- Blanche Touhill: I know. That's one of the most remarkable...do you have any answer for that?
- Pat Whitaker: No, except that we have architects and who are principals in our firm, who are real experienced, so I never tried to do the architecture either. It actually was too technical for me. There's the design part and then there's the technical part which I'm really not very good at anyway. I mean, you have to make sure it works, the building stands up and all that kind of thing. No, the only answer I can think of is the relationship with the client, that they trusted you and that they would trust that you were going to take care of them, and you're going to hire the right people and the right architects, and they knew the architects too. They didn't just know me.
- Blanche Touhill: Well, then, is the answer to your personality growth, is that it just occurred slowly over a series of years?
- Pat Whitaker: Yeah, I guess so.

Blanche Touhill: Because you have become a leader. You're very well known in St. Louis.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah.

Blanche Touhill: And you're well known for leading an architectural firm really, but you're not an architect.

Pat Whitaker: Right, right. Well, I guess I just like running things.

Blanche Touhill: Did you always like running things?

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: Even in high school or grade school?

Pat Whitaker: When I was a little kid, I used to want to be a movie director and I'd do little plays and things, like, neighborhood things, really small things.

Blanche Touhill: But you would instruct children, just to go here and stand there...

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, stand here and stand there and, okay, here's our play, and blah, blah, blah. So I don't know, I never actually put it all together, but I guess that's where it came from. You're kind of like a shrink, Blanche.

Blanche Touhill: [laughter] Well, I'm trying to find out what makes a leader, what makes a woman leader in this period of time of such transition.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, which it was huge because I can see it now, there's women everywhere, which is great. I mean, everybody who's in my age group, we always talk about, that it really has come a long way. I know it still has a way to go, but even now, I think women are taking over St. Louis. When you look at all these major corporations, and the airport, and the not-for-profits, I mean, all of the universities, all of them, they really are. And I don't think men actually notice that, that they're really in senior, senior positions.

Blanche Touhill: Yeah, yeah, and you can think about the companies in St. Louis...

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, and they're Fortune 500 companies. They're not little, yeah, and they're good. I mean, I know most of them, and they're all, like, really sharp. I mean, they got there because they deserved it.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, yes.

- Pat Whitaker: Yeah. I think my biggest surprise was Doug Yaeger actually picked Suzanne Sitherwood. I just was floored by that, because I know her from the building, and we're doing some work for her and where they're going to move. And she's...
- Blanche Touhill: And she's fighting her way through that, too, isn't she?
- Pat Whitaker: Oh, she is, yeah. She's going to have a fight.
- Blanche Touhill: I think she's got a very good...
- Pat Whitaker: Oh, she's ready, yeah. She's ready. The financial thing's the one that might get that one because we don't know what the cost is yet, which will be a lot.
- Blanche Touhill: But if she's expanding her personnel, she's got to have more room to do that.
- Pat Whitaker: Yeah, she's got to have more room. She needs presence, which doesn't really have as much in that building, and it'll be great for St. Louis. It's right on the Gateway Mall there, and it's this vacant—and that's a class building too. That's a cool building, yeah. So somebody needs to do it and it works for them. It's just if the finances work and the TIF and all the rest of that, which they don't know yet for sure.
- Blanche Touhill: Oh, well. Well, let's put it this way: I think she's capable of handling it. What happens, no one knows.
- Pat Whitaker: Yeah, that's true, and if it doesn't work, she'll move somewhere else. She'll do something else, yeah. Yeah.
- Blanche Touhill: Well, is there anything else you want to add here, or something you—? What about awards? What kind of awards...
- Pat Whitaker: Well, I've won a bunch of awards. One of the first ones that I got was the Entrepreneur of the Year from McKendree College, and then the Business Journal award and the YMCA and the Trailblazer award from Forum that you also won. I was at your speech when you got that award. Actually, I was really thrilled to get that.
- Blanche Touhill: Yes. You know, that group is filled with trailblazers.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, I know. That's why I thought, "Whoa!" And you know, last year we gave it to three, which I thought it was kind of cool. So anyway, that's all I can think of off the top of my head.

[background conversation]

Blanche Touhill: Leadership shows itself when you get on a board. What boards are you on?

Pat Whitaker: I'm on the board of Webster University, which I think they're in a real dynamic phase of their growth, and I'm chairing the Contemporary Art Museum for it right now, and this is our 10th anniversary so that's kind of fun. We have a great executive director, so there's not much to do but run board meetings. And Children's Hospital, the board of Children's Hospital and on their strategic planning committee. Oh, and Go Red for Women, which is the American Heart Association—and that one, I'm on their board. Last year I chaired their annual luncheon, which was kind of fun. So it's kind of important, and I encourage everybody in our business to get on boards, and they are. They're all on boards of different kinds, I mean, all our principals. So it's carrying on.

Blanche Touhill: So partnership is your theme?

Pat Whitaker: I guess so, yeah.

Blanche Touhill: In a way.

Pat Whitaker: And our business is changing from an entrepreneurship to having a more diverse leadership. That's why we have five principals who are all stockholders now, and that's the only way it'll grow to the next phase, and they all know that, because now there's five people making it grow. You still need a president or somebody, you know, the buck-stops-here person.

Blanche Touhill: But they all have areas that they...

Pat Whitaker: They all have areas that they work in and clients that they take care of.

Blanche Touhill: And they understand the company and how it works.

Pat Whitaker: Yeah, and they know it really well, yeah. So now we just need the economy to keep getting better.

Blanche Touhill: Yes. Well, thank you very much.

Pat Whitaker: Well, thank you, Blanche. I'm really flattered to have been asked.