

Arthur Mallory: My name is Arthur Mallory. I'm a retired school teacher. I started out in the Columbia Public Schools and then after I finished my doctorate in 1959, I came to the Parkway School District in St. Louis County. I was the assistant superintendent of schools there for five years. During those years, we were growing very rapidly as was the case of all school districts in the western part of the county. I think we had 2,000 students when I went there in 1959 and when I left, it was about 8 or 9,000, five years later and I had predicted that the Parkway District would go to 30,000 or more and it did at one point. After I finished there, in five years, I was the dean at the University of Missouri in St. Louis, UMSL, and I was there for four months and they caught on, so I had to leave and I became president of Missouri State University which was then Southwest Missouri State College in 1964. I stayed there until 1971, the first day of 1971, I became the commissioner of education for the state and I was in that position for 18 years. So it's pretty simple.

William Fischetti: Tell us about the things in your life that led you to see the value of education prior to kindergarten.

Arthur Mallory: Back when I became commissioner of education, most of the schools in the State of Missouri had no kindergarten. Now, that maybe surprises a lot of people because everybody has a kindergarten these days but that was not the case in 1971. So kindergarten was established...the first kindergarten in the United States was in St. Louis, started by Susan Blow in the City of St. Louis but most of the schools in the state were out in the rural areas and there was no kindergarten. St. Louis County had kindergarten, had special education back in those days but that was not the case throughout the State of Missouri. Back when I was a kid living with a superintendent of schools and a classroom teacher, my dad made the observation one time that "By the time a child gets to us in first grade, if I can observe that child up to about the second grade, I can tell you how the kid is going to act and how he's going to do in school for the rest of the time." That made a big impression with me. I thought, are you a seer and so forth, but any classroom teacher, any elementary school teacher, once the child comes into kindergarten these days or in the first grade, it becomes pretty evident that the "isms" that that child will possess throughout life maybe have already been established. The child is going to have already decided whether or not he'll be kind or unkind. That's pretty well set. You can make changes but that's indelibly set in

many cases. They've decided whether or not they're going to be obedient to the constituted authority or disobedient; they've decided whether or not they're going to learn to share or not share, those things have been established and it just was common sense. I was "Dad" during the years I was...when I came to the State Department of Education and it just was pretty easy to see that we needed to do something earlier than by the time we got the child in kindergarten or the first grade and it was very difficult to talk people into the idea of doing something much earlier than first grade or kindergarten. Kindergarten came slowly. Early childhood education or whatever that might mean, has come very slowly back over the years but it's evident that by the time we get the child in the early grades, the youngster has already had much of his learning; much of what he's going to become has been established and if you go to a psychiatrist or a psychologist, they'll ask you about your childhood and we know that. So it just became clear that we ought to do something earlier. I asked Mildred Winter to come to work for us. Mildred was operating an early childhood-type program in the Ferguson-Florissant School District and I asked P.J. Newell, one of my colleagues in Jefferson City, "Who's the top person in early childhood work." He said, "Mildred Winter." I've heard about her so we contacted her, we employed her and I said, "Mildred, your only responsibility is to report to me because I'm interested in what we might do with very young children and their families and you get out and stir around and see what we can stir up," so therein started the possibility of eventually the Parents as Teachers Program.

William Fischetti: When did it become a program with the state?

Arthur Mallory: In 1981 and I know you've interviewed Mildred and she has a higher track memory. In 1981, we established a model program. We hired Dr. Burton White. One of the things that impressed me was I had read Dr. White's letter, "The First Three Years of Life," ...or his book, "The First Three Years of Life" and it made a lot of sense so we hired Dr. White to come and help us with the experiment of starting a Parents as Teachers program working with families, working with families of yet unborn children and we had a number of young women, of women in the last trimester of their first pregnancy in four different school districts, we established rural and urban, the program in those districts and we said to these women, "Stick with us and we'll help you raise a great kid." We didn't have

sonograms back in that day so we couldn't see what we might be going to have and the fact of the matter is that when that program was evaluated against a like number of families and children, our kids were so significantly advanced intellectually, socially and physically that it got international attention and the program was...and then it took a little while to get the general assembly to approve legislation which would pay for the program in the State of Missouri and that program was voluntary on the part of families and mandatory on the part of school districts, to offer the program and Parents as Teachers was established.

William Fischetti: How long did they track that initial group of children?

Arthur Mallory: After the three years...I don't remember how long. Mildred would know that but today, we are claiming, and I think it's absolutely correct, the kids who are in Parents as Teachers Programs are always ready to go to school and that's not true cross the world but our kids, if their families have been participating in the program, they're ready to go to school when the time comes. I promised the general assembly when we were discussing the possibility and still trying to get a little law passed which Kit Bond was instrumental in getting it finally in the law, I promised the general assembly that if "you'll do a good job with the child and the family early on, we can help eliminate a lot of the special education problems" and no telling how many of those...that promise has come true in the lives of many families because early on, if you can identify what might be a problem with learning or physically for the child and do some things to correct, then you don't have the problem and we have no record as to how many of children we kept out of special education but I'm confident it's been significant.

William Fischetti: How did you come to connect with Mildred Winter and why did you pick her to deliver on your vision for early childhood education? I think we already covered that. Let's talk about the Parents as Teachers pilot program. How were the districts chosen, how were the families chosen and what were some of the early results you saw from the effort?

Arthur Mallory: Mildred and I met once a week in my offices and I would take as long as we needed for her to bring me up-to-date on what was going on around the state and by the time we got to 1981, she and I had been working together nearly a decade and we were constantly in touch with one another and she and we identified the programs. We wanted urban and

rural school districts. We wanted superintendents who would be amenable to experimenting with families of much younger children than kindergarten age and we found those and what we did is, Dr. White and his crew of people went to those locations and they helped the school district do the Parents as Teachers Program over a period of three years. This was not inexpensive. We had to have outside help, with Dr. White and his team and the school districts had to be willing to stick right to it and to follow directions from Burton White who was a...he was a Harvard professor of psychology and he was excellent; he did a great job with us on those early school district models and, as I said earlier, after the third year of working with the families and working with the child...and I know we know what happens, you know, I have a great grandson in the Kirkwood School District who's in the program and this past week his home visitor came and worked with his mom and dad and him and spent an hour or so and observed and made suggestions and so forth. And that's what we do. We send a seasoned veteran parent educator into the home and, of course, it's voluntary on the part of the family, to allow such a thing to happen but when they do and when they cooperate, they get a good relationship with the family and with the parent educator and the child profits there from. So, as a result of that over a three-year period, we found great success in getting the child moving along in a very productive way, and as I said, we evaluated our kids against a like group of children and we compared and the Parents as Teachers' children were very significantly ahead of a like control group and it was well established across the State of Missouri and then across the United States that the program was successful.

William Fischetti: That initial three years, did school districts then offer Parents as Teachers to the parents or did your organization go in and pick the parents that were going to be in that initial three-year...

Arthur Mallory: In the initial program, we cooperated with the school district. Dr. White and Mildred and our staff would not have known who those people needed to be but they agreed upon these folks and we had all kinds of ladies in the program in the last trimester of their first pregnancy and I think the record will show that nearly all of them stuck with the program for three years.

William Fischetti: So, is that how it works now? Is it that the school district offers it and the parents sign up?

Arthur Mallory: By law, the school district must offer the program and parents may choose whether or not to use the program for their very young children. On a regular basis, I'm here or there, around over the state and in my own home town of Springfield and I'll see a young child with her or his mother and I'll ask, "Do you have this little girl in the Parents as Teachers Program?" Nearly always, they'll say, "I've heard of it" or "Yes, we're using it." Periodically, they've never heard of it and I'll say, "You need to call your school district and tell them you would like to have somebody come and visit and get you established in the program" and it's voluntary on the part of the family; it's mandatory on the part of the school district.

William Fischetti: Well, I would think every parent would want it. Talk about your involvement in getting the legislation passed that established funding for the Parents as Teachers in Missouri?

Arthur Mallory: After we knew the program was working, in 1984, after three years of research, we wrote a short little bill to require the program to be offered by the school district and provide money for the school district to run the program and it took a couple of years and it took Kit Bond to be interested and to say that, "Yes, this is something we need to do" and as governor, he became quite interested in the program and he was instrumental, along with a couple of his staff members, Jane Nelson and Chip Castille, in getting the legislator to agree to do this. It wasn't easy. Many people just couldn't visualize; many schools couldn't visualize doing something with people under six years of age or under five years of age because it just wasn't what we were doing and it wasn't the way it had been done for forever and ever just as when we started special education in 1973 and '4 with a House Bill 474 in this state, it was hard to get schools to think that "maybe we need to do a big thing with children who have special needs" and it was a change and many of the school districts in those days were not much in favor of that kind of additional responsibility and in the general assembly, we had a lot of debate as to whether or not this was the right thing to do. A good friend of mine in the general assembly said, "I know Arthur Mallory and I know he's not a communist but this is a communistically-inspired program." Well, it wasn't communistically inspired. We don't include. Our parent educators

don't go in and include but that was a concern and after the program was well established and for a while...several years later, I would periodically be on a radio hook-up answering questions from people as to why we ought to have done this. One very conservative radio announcer was very nice to me but he said, "Well, Mr. Mallory, don't you really think you should never have done this? Don't you wish you had not done this?" and I said, "No, I wish I had learned...I'd known to do it earlier because it's very valuable to a child and to the child's family." It wasn't an easy thing to do. Mildred was very instrumental in getting the area, the people, the people out in the school districts involved in lobbying the general assembly to get the program going.

William Fischetti: How did the relationship with Kit Bond start? Did you approach him or did he hear about the program?

Arthur Mallory: We approached him. I first met Kit Bond. I was the president-elect of the Springfield Rotary Club back in 1970 and Kit was running for auditor and he came and spoke and that was my first contact with Kit Bond. He was the auditor for two years and then he ran for governor and he was elected. I was in Jefferson City at the time as commissioner of education and Kit and I became friends. Kit did an excellent job as governor and we could talk and his door was open and when we were interested in this Parents as Teachers program, Mildred and I, very often, we'd go over and talk to him about it and we introduced him to it. Kit got much more interested in it when Sam, his son, came along and he decided this was something he wanted to leave as a legacy and he did so with a lot of style and he did an excellent job getting the legislation through but, like everybody else, it was brand new to him and he had to think about it but it didn't take him long to decide that it was the right thing to do.

William Fischetti: And he continues to be involved?

Arthur Mallory: Very much and when he was in the Senate, the United States Senate, he did several things to try to emphasize the importance of young children and their families getting ready to do the learning process. The learning starts before the child is born. We have all kinds of research now and the learning starts if the dad will speak and talk to the child in the womb and will sing to the child and do some things, that child will recognize the father's voice upon being born and we have good research showing that. All you have to do is get a little drum and hook some sensors up to the

baby and it doesn't hurt and just hook it up to that little drum that goes around and the doctor can speak to the child and nothing much happens and the great grandfather can speak to the child and nothing much happens but the dad, who's been talking to the child, starts talking to the child and the sensors just go wild. They recognize it, a parent's voice.

William Fischetti: That's amazing.

Arthur Mallory: It's a big deal and we need to recognize that that's when learning starts. So you start reading stories; you start talking to the child and they may not learn to read in the womb but they can learn a lot of stuff.

William Fischetti: I assume that Parents as Teachers has brought forth a lot of research...

Arthur Mallory: I think so; I think so...

William Fischetti: ...even further...

Arthur Mallory: Beyond...yeah, beyond what we did.

William Fischetti: That's amazing. In '85, the New York Times published an article touting the success of the pilot program. What impact did that article have on the program?

Arthur Mallory: It got some international attention. In the archives...I presume we still have the articles and it got international attention. You know, education is much on the mind of all people. We know it's important and mothers and dads all across the world would like for their kids to do good in school. We want our child to do good and when something comes up that proves the point, that, if you do these things, school will be easier; school will be better done, parents are going to pay attention and we just had lots and lots of people all across the United States and elsewhere, and particularly in Missouri, who saw this as an important discovery that, if you do better from birth to three, that your child will profit for years thereafter.

William Fischetti: Is there any cost to the parents in this?

Arthur Mallory: In the beginning, here in Missouri, the general assembly pretty well funded most of what the cost was for Parents as Teachers. It would be good, in many cases, for the home visitor to make three or four or five visits, maybe even in a month with some children and families who could

use the assistance and their ideas and so forth but we've had to scale back because the money has not kept up and in some school districts, in fact, in Springfield, Missouri where I live, this year, the school district has decided to put a significant amount of money into the program from their local resources to see to it that home visiting continues on a more consistent basis.

William Fischetti: That's great. Talk about some of the things you think were keys to that success.

Arthur Mallory: Well, I think...

William Fischetti: I missed one: At what point did you realize Parents as Teachers was going to be successful beyond Missouri and did that success include becoming an international organization?

Arthur Mallory: I left the employ of the State Department of Education and Mildred...but before I did that, I had set up an arrangement with the president of the University of Missouri for them to house Parents as Teachers just like your organization is usually housed around universities. That didn't work out perfectly and so a board was established and they went independent and Mildred was working for that board and the point where we knew it was going to do well was just watching Mildred Winter work with the people to move the program forward. She was a key to the success. She was totally committed to the well-being of that program and what it would do for families and I knew, after I watched Mildred work, I knew she was going to be successful and that the program would have every reason to be able to thrive. We have a number of other people who were key to the well-being of the program other than the governor and Mildred. We have some people here, in St. Louis County, who were very committed to this program, whatever it was going to be and Carolyn Losos...you're going to interview her...Carolyn was one of those people and she stuck with it. She and I have been on the...we've stayed on the governing board all these years and we have lay citizens, people who are not school teachers or not in the school district who have stayed right with the program over the years, believing that if we do a great job with the child and the family early on and just give them the help they need, that education will be much more successful and it's proven to be the point.

- William Fischetti: And that goes to citizenship as well?
- Arthur Mallory: Absolutely, yes.
- William Fischetti: I guess I'd like to say that there's a lot of children out there that are lucky that you and Mildred came along and that you...
- Arthur Mallory: That's nice to say that, and, you know, periodically, somebody will ask, "When did you think of Parents as Teachers?" Well, it evolves, these things evolve and when Mildred and I started working together in the early '70s, we didn't know Parents as Teachers; we just knew that something more needed to be done with younger children to be ready to go to school.
- William Fischetti: That's great. You've been quoted as saying, "Watch the learner, the way to know if a teacher is being most effective." Talk about how that can help parents become good teachers as well as help teachers continue the process in the classroom.
- Arthur Mallory: Well, back in the day, when I became commissioner of education, the State Board of Education, in my first meeting with them, said, "Well, a lot of people don't know what we do and they don't really know what the commissioner of education's function is and we want you to try to change that" and it occurred to me the best to do that was to get out and across the state and make speeches and whoop it up for public education. I did that and one of the things that I suggested was that if you'll keep your eye on the learner in school, if parents will keep their eye on the learner, if the teacher will never fail to watch the learner, good things will happen. Once we take our eye off of the end product, and that's a better society with better educated children and young people, then we'll make a mistake but you'll never make a mistake if you watch the learner. So I just pushed that idea and I think it's right.
- William Fischetti: Having been a teacher, I know that they actually teach that in the education program. Why have you remained involved with Parents as Teachers?
- Arthur Mallory: Well, you know, here I am in my 80's and you can't do everything that you might be interested in doing but I think you have to have some causes. I teach a Sunday School class every Sunday morning. I do a Bible study at an upscale nursing home every Tuesday morning. These are

things that I think are important. I think Parents as Teachers is important and I have several causes. I can't do as many things as I used to but these are the things that I focus on and, because of my belief that Parents as Teachers is valuable, I have been eager to stay on the board and have some...whatever help I can provide, I want to continue to do that.

William Fischetti: What will the history books write about Parents as Teachers' impact?

Arthur Mallory: Well, we're writing that right now. I guess history is nearly always written by the survivors but it's a good idea to put some of this history while people who remember it and lived it are still around to say something about it but I think history will say about Parents as Teachers that...and I hope it continues and whether or not the name is going to always be Parents as Teachers, I see nothing wrong with it; it's a good name. Regardless of what it may look like in the future, if we continue to focus on the child and the child's family and are helpful to them as they raise that youngster...my grandson and granddaughter-in-law are pretty smart kids. They're both finishing their doctorates. They read ever book about getting ready for the birth of my great grandson. They read everything. She is a vociferous reader and she read everything she could. When the home visitor came the first time, they were both amazed at how helpful this person was, even though they thought they knew a lot about raising a child. We get more information about a new Chevrolet car than we do about having a child coming into the home and it's very helpful to have the right person and the family hook up for the benefit of that little child. I think the future for Parents as Teachers is always going to be rich and useful if children continue to thrive from the result of the program.

William Fischetti: Is there a way that the parents all know about it, at least? I mean, the school districts, are they still as active as they were originally?

Arthur Mallory: Well, when we started special education back in the early '70s, part of the law...when we wrote the law, we required the school district to advertise that the program was available, special education was available and it's the obligation of the school district to fit the program to suit the needs of the child. We don't have that requirement, that we advertisement in the little special education legislation so we don't...it's word-of-mouth. The school district in Springfield, they have under the list of all the functions that the school district does and the telephone book,

Parents as Teachers is there, but one of the things that needs to be improved upon is to see that the story, the truth of the story is out there and a lot of people still are unfamiliar with the opportunity available to the young family and that's something that needs to be improved upon.

William Fischetti: Does Parents as Teachers have a representative in every school district, a teacher or somebody who promotes this?

Arthur Mallory: There's a parent educator, at least, and in some very small school districts, it may be that...and it would be a good idea, for two school districts, very small, to go together to cooperate in the Parents as Teachers program, but there is Parents as Teachers, there's a requirement in the law that every school district offer the program so somebody there has to be in charge.

William Fischetti: I'm just thinking of advertising.

Arthur Mallory: Yeah, I understand.

William Fischetti: Do they do that in their local area?

Arthur Mallory: I don't know how they do it everywhere but I know the national center does encourage the parent educators and the superintendent of schools and the school officials to be aggressive in helping the public understand and know what's available.

William Fischetti: It seems to me the internet and the social media would be an excellent way to promote that, although...

Arthur Mallory: Maybe we ought to hire you to come over...

William Fischetti: I don't know anything about it. I just know it exists.

Arthur Mallory: Well, you're right; you're exactly right.

William Fischetti: I'm not real good with Facebook. What is your hope for Parents as Teachers in the future?

Arthur Mallory: Well, I hope it continues. I hope we can get more and more of the people who make the decisions in the general assembly in Missouri and across the states and then in the Congress of the United States to recognize that probably what we do here at the very earliest moments is even more significant than what we do in the upper grades because this, if we do

well with the young child, will guarantee success throughout school. Now, not all children will be straight A students and it's fiction to believe that everybody can jump in, swim hard and come out at the other end at the same time, but it's not fiction to believe that everybody can jump in and eventually work their way to the other side and in most cases, everybody will be able to come out with the right kind of assistance. Special education provides that assistance; vocational, technical education provides that kind of assistance; college preparatory programs provide that kind of assistance and if we'll focus our attention on the child, if all of society will recognize that the future is that child and if we put all of our resources to work to see that that child is comfortable and successful and can live a happy life, society will thrive and that's important.

William Fischetti: I guess I have a question from my own personal experience: If everything works well with these children up until they enter the school system and they're reading well and they're doing all that thing, boredom might be an issue if the school program doesn't keep up with that, it would seem. I was very bored in school most of the time. My parents had me reading when I was young and I got a lot of that early pre-school training and it just seemed like the school program didn't keep up with what I needed.

Arthur Mallory: And it wasn't necessary that that be the case because schools should be able to fashion that program to suit the individual abilities and needs of each child. I know, some kids are pretty bored. People used to ask me when I was in higher education, "What do you have to do to get ready to go to school and what kind of school do you need to be in?" and I've usually said that if the family will be supportive and if the society will provide access and if the child is a willing learner and chooses to learn, then you just can't stop good education from happening and you can do that in nearly any school district. Every school district has opportunity and we need to improve; we need to be able to do a better job. We need to focus on all levels of learning. In our special education legislation, which we did in 1973, I think, I asked them to stick...we were writing it there in our office and I asked them to stick a paragraph in there requiring programs for the gifted and I knew...I didn't think we could get something through the general assembly for those gifted kids because they're all smart and so forth. The fact of the matter is, a truly gifted child is really at risk because everything in our society kind of mitigates against

a child retaining those special, unusual gifts. Let's all walk together; let's all do this together and so forth and maybe a good education for many people is to scatter them out and do well with all of them and that's a tough deal. My wife is a retired school teacher; my mother was a retired school teacher; my dad taught and did a superintendent's job for 50 years; I have a son who's a retired teacher; I have a daughter who just retired as a school teacher. They'll all tell you that one of the toughest things in the world is to take these kids with all their abilities and different abilities and move them together and still move them separately and that's a tough job. One of the hardest jobs in the world as an elementary classroom teacher's job because you have all the children of all the people coming to your school with all the expectations and you want to do good by them; you want to do a good job by them and that's not easy and it requires the family to be involved and to participate and it involves the teacher and the school district to be creative in finding ways for little boys not to be bored.

William Fischetti: Right. Fortunately, I had a family that kept me from being bored but, I mean, the school work...I remember they gave me my 7th grade history book and I took it on and read the whole thing that weekend and went back and, "Okay, now what?"

Arthur Mallory: You're not the normal person.

William Fischetti: Anyway, is there anything you'd like to say?

Arthur Mallory: I think we've had a good discussion. I hope it's not bored you to death.

William Fischetti: No, I'm very excited by this whole thing. I mean, I think this is a great idea.

Arthur Mallory: And, you know, you ask about, what's the future. The future is up to us, whether or not we are willing to put the resources where it will make the greatest difference. I one time suggested to a big rotary club that maybe the senior year ought to be given a way...and I didn't mean it...that early childhood, work with young people, that might be more important than some of the things we do at the upper grades. However, those upper grades are valuable and all of it can work if we choose to make it work.

William Fischetti: All right. Well, thank you very much.

Arthur Mallory: Yes, sir. Thank you.