

MARTHANN MARKLE TRANSCRIPT

Date July 2015

Damian Macey Interviewer

Transcribed by Donna Duzan, April 2018

D: This is Damian Macey and I am at the Marshall Public Library interviewing Marthann Markle for the Friends of the Library Oral History Project. And her maiden name happened to be Bush, a very dominant name here in our community. So with that, I am introducing you to Marthann.

M: Well, Damian, this has been such an honor to be asked to do this. We have had some trouble setting up a time, but here we are now accomplishing it. I think it is wonderful to do this because at 75 years old, I am not going to last forever, and all the things that have happened to me during my lifetime, it's nice to know that people are interested enough to want these histories done.

Probably the very first thing that I put on list of things is, Mr. Vaughn Arney was such a big factor in my life, he was such a influence in my life. Kids would say I got to do so many things in my life but it's not who you know, it's what you produce. My Arney was really great to me. I remember once he was sitting at the piano playing and he stopped, he had the whole chorus in there at the time, and he said, "Marthann we need some dancin girls." And I said to him I wasn't really sure what he wanted, and he said "We'll talk after this class." And I said OK and he said really what I want is a way to increase the band and so many girls, all they can do it cheerlead, and there is not another activity they can do, and this way we can open up another activity for girls. And I said I think there are enough dancers in Marshall and that is when we started the Marshallettes. He never did criticize me as far as costuming or anything but I had women like Rozella Jones, who was Roberta's mother, who made the first costume for the Sparkettes so she put together another costume for the Marshallettes.

It was a lot fun to do and the Marshallettes are still alive, and it is rather ironic that they didn't have a director and I put my application in to see if the board of education would let me do that, and they said yes, so then there was a director. It wasn't always easy, sometimes parents thought they had better ideas than the director, but you always listen and make the decision. I'm not sure who is directing now, but they are still going.

D: Did you select the name Marshallettes?

M: I would imagine that Mr. Arney throughout several names because he definitely was a leader, and we all respected and loved him so, I will give him the credit. What was so ironic was, the younger girls are called the Cub Cadets and those girls are 6,7,8th grade. That age is harder, you have to be a dancer or you just can't keep up.

Another person at the top of my list is Ernestine Myers. Ernestine was my dancing teacher for all of my life. Miss Ernestine was a professional all her life and danced on Broadway and was a beautiful woman and what a dancer she was!! Her mother lived with her, she had two husbands and lost them both to

death. And if you were asked to go downstairs in the big house on Fifth St in Terre Haute, you knew you had had a good day because Miss Ernestine's mother was going to critique you. That was always an honor, she would have her mother go upstairs or we would go downstairs. She was a tiny "fairy" type lady with beautiful clothes and hair but very petite. Miss Ernestine always looked very professional. Chris Bennett, and Mary Kay Mitchell took lessons from me when I started my studio. Their mothers came to me and asked if I would start a studio and when Crissy comes back she always visits me and she asked me if I remember that I paid her to take the money. She told me that she contributes a lot of her success to the things that I taught her.

And then Mary Kay went to Purdue, Crissy went to the University of Illinois. And one day Mary Kay came to me and said she wanted to be in the Miss Purdue contest going towards the Miss America pageant. And I said OK we will fix up a dance for you, we picked "I Enjoy Being a Girl" and she got second runner-up and she was very happy with that and so were her parents. Miss Ernestine helped us with that. Its fun to talk to them, of course Mary Kay has passed away now, but she was Crissy's best friend.

So really, Vaughn Arney and Miss Ernestine are the main influencers in my life but there have been so many. Sometimes my dad could be very very tough and my mom always backed me up when he got too tough on me.

D: I remember meeting Ernestine Myers. Her brother used to live in Martinsville and I used to mow yards and he owned a drug store. He was visiting her one night and he was killed in an auto accident.

M: I don't think I ever met her brother. I did meet Nicky Bushash and Nicky is a French major and was a professor at school and his sister taught for Miss Ernestine. And they also danced for Miss Ernestine, her name was Flora Ann and she was a wonderful tap dancer.

Because of doing the Miss Purdue contest, I have been asked to a lot of pageants. Whether they be fair contests, and I will never forget when daddy said, "Well we need a beauty contest now." And there were 30 young ladies in the very first beauty contest and I have a picture of them all lined up. And Carol Smitley or Terri Turner were at the top of the list. They were both very attractive and talented. This was not the fair contest but just one that we put on. And it led to what they do now. So I also judged pageants and I enjoyed that very much. Besides doing all the singing that I have done all my life, and of course my mother had a beautiful voice, I was very fortunate to have gotten some of her talent, and when Helen Moore decided to start the Auxiliary Choir, I'll never forget I was on the steps of the high school and Emmie Fritcher came to me and said they wanted me to be in the choir, and I was so pleased. Carol Curran and I were the youngest in the choir. Of course that was when they were winning national championships. And Helen Moore is another person that would go to the top of my list. Helen was a fabulous director, she knew exactly what she wanted, knew the kind of music to pick, and that is how we could win. And Marshall was so proud of us, and I know there is a plaque down at the Legion with everybody's name on it.

D: She was not only a fabulous person, but also a fabulous musician and a great person to pattern your life after.

M: And it was fun to sing in the church choir. And after Helen did it, Priscilla Wieck did it and now Paula Ross is doing it. All people who know and love music.

You have probably had a lot of people mention Daddy (Charles Bush) and I may repeat some of those thoughts, but I jotted down a few of things about him: Hulman Center at ISU was a big project that he believed in, and he felt that it should be a convention center and not just a basketball area; also he had a lot to do with the American Legion, and knew that there needed to be a suitable meeting place for the legionnaires; and he worked very hard on Burnside's Nursing Home; and the Clark County Fair; and other projects that he contributed to.

D: Was he instrumental in getting the first Burnside's building done?

M: He was in the first group of men. They lived there for a short time then Johnny took daddy to Florida and I looked after mother at Burnside's. Daddy did not like to take directions from me or anybody, so we felt it better for him to go with Johnny. And we would go out and do shows for the residents. And Uncle Roy who lived with us, gave an organ when it was first built.

Also when Charlotte and Rett worked so hard to get the Fall Festival going, also Jerry Forsythe, they worked so hard and they were getting better shows than Terre Haute was. But daddy really felt that the fairgrounds needed to be taken care of, the track, the horse barns.

D: There are two names I want to ask you about, you said Charlotte and Rett, and you mean Charlotte Dashiell and Rett Smitley, right?

M: Yes, and also Pat Rhoads and Joe Smitley, Pat McCammon that also helped. It was always beautifully run, and people so enjoyed coming and seeing the shows, etc. I do miss Charlotte and Rett doing it, but you can't do it forever. Melissa, my daughter, and I were talking about when I retire, you don't want them to come to you and suggest that it's time for you to retire, you want to leave something when you are on top. And I have missed teaching dance a lot. I really miss teaching ballroom dancing and that is what I ended up teaching, they brought me back when Greta Tracer retired, Greta and her husband were tremendous ballroom dancers. I will never forget the phone call when John Osborn called me, and said they couldn't pay me much but could I come back and teach ballroom dance? And I said I would love to do it. And it was very successful. People would ask how do you get the men to do it? I said to tell them that it is almost important as golf, as far as doing business. So if a businessman can also do dance contest, it makes them look important and successful.

Talent contest, and baton contests was something I really loved to do also. So I taught a lot of baton twirling, Marjann Richardson and Roberta Jones were two that I taught that were absolutely fantastic. Our school doesn't have a feature twirler now, but, in the south it is still popular but not here up north.

D: You mentioned two names, Marjann Richardson who I know, who was the other one?

M: Roberta Jones Leatherman, Olen and Rozella Jones daughter, and her brother, Glen also took dancing lessons, his mother brought him out on the front porch with Roberta and she said she wanted these two to be able to walk across the floor without falling down. Rozella was the lady that made

costumes for me. And to this day, when I see Glen, he tells me that he can still walk across the floor! He was fun to be with and Roberta was an excellent teacher. She was a principal up north at Elkart and her husband was the band director. It was funny how they met. I had sent her over to do the corp in Brazil, and he was working with the band, and they met and have been married for many years. And every once in a while they stop in to visit.

D: I would like you to talk about your mother. I know she sang in the church choir, but didn't she have a dynamic career in teaching?

M: Mother could sense when students needed help the way she gave it. And the way she gave it was to listening to them and helping them to realize how important they are in the world. And I still have people come up to me and say that they contribute their success to my mother. And I tell them I contribute my success to my mother too. She was an individual who loved people, she wanted them to succeed, you knew that by the way that she treated them, she was an excellent teacher and received many awards. She taught in Marshall some but it was better when she taught in Terre Haute. She taught at South High School that graduates thousands of student each year.

I asked my daughter where she wanted to go to college and she said ISU where all of our Bush family have gone. And it has grown so much over the years that we all have attended there.

Talking about the pool, some people say we should cover the pool which would cost a tremendous amount of money. When it was first built, we did shows, and Daralea Smith remembers that, and people that were very good could do synchronized swimming shows.

D: You were talking about your dad being involved in different things, was he one of the men who started to get Formalite going?

M: Yes, and would you believe that my granddaughter, Maddie, is a senior at state now and she needed a good full time job and she works down there. She really enjoys it and she works a twelve hour shift. She tells me I have got to keep my dogs quiet, so she can sleep.

D: I guess I remember hearing his name along the Benny Marris and some of the other people who helped get it started.

M: And look at it now...it's probably one of the better jobs in town.

D: You mentioned your love of music, your mother's love of music, and that has been passed on down to your granddaughter, I believe.

M: Paula Ross is wonderful to work with and Paula recognized that Maddie plays a pretty good flute and piccolo and she would have her do different numbers with the choir and Maddie really enjoyed doing that, she would do anything for Paula. Voice teachers are hard to find now. Mr. Tafflinger, Johnny my brother took voice from him, and he did "Stout Hearted Men" in a recital. Johnny was not a singer, he was an athlete. He was some of the first people to be an excellent athlete on the board at school and he is still working and I ask him when is he going to retired? He told me that daddy said that

sometimes when you retire, you get a little lazy, and I don't want to get lazy.

Back to my mother, my mother was a fine voice teacher and she took from some of the best teachers. She loved to sing and had a beautiful voice and people would ask her to sing at shows or funerals and Helen used her as a soloist in the choir. Don Ferris, the one that works at Marathon, and he had a record of the auxiliary choir and he gave it to me. And it had "Let My People Go" and some of the songs that we had won with and I thought that was so thoughtful of him. Marshall is really a wonderful town for taking care of things that saving the record and passing it on so that I can do the same someday.

D: Is it the Don Ferris that had the wife named Martha?

M: Yes. And we bought that house that they all lived in on Eighth Street. Well, I think I have covered most of the questions/answers I had on here.

D: You mentioned music, but did you have other hobbies that you enjoyed?

M: I love to crochet, and I love to do crewel, I don't do either of those much anymore. Also I enjoy listening and giving my opinion when someone is going to do a musical performance. Especially if we have a good accompanist like Damian Macey. When I got asked to sing at the Catholic Church, it was wonderful when you and Stephanie played. It was like Big time and extraordinarily wonderful.

D: Thank you. You mentioned that you have a couple little animals. Did you always have pets?

M: We always had a dog. Daddy had bird dogs and we usually had a house dog, a cocker spaniel. Today I have a schnauzer. She is a little bigger schnauzer than we usually have. Melissa, my daughter, is a runner, like yesterday she ran 25 miles, and her husband runs with her. Sometimes they walk but most of the time they run. They have been to several different states running and they have medals that they have received. And the other dog I have is a Yorkipoo, and I am trying to teach him to be a better dog so he is sleeping now in the laundry room in a cage. He needs to learn that he is not the alpha dog. Last night he made it through the whole night and didn't cry. This dog was given to me as a gift, there was a family who needed help. It's been the best dog I have ever had. He follows me wherever I go in the house.

D: You have mentioned all these things that you have done with your father and your mother, but you didn't say where you lived.

M: Well, when we first came to town, there is a little house behind the jail, and Jim Waugh, the basketball coach had taken another job and we bought that house. My payment for that house was \$88 per month. But it became too small. My grandmother was a couple blocks away and she helped me take care of Maddie because I never did stop teaching when I had Maddie. I'll never forget, when Eleanor St. John called and wanted me to come back and do the Sparkettes, she said they were doing alright but not as good as when I was doing it. And she said I would be teaching tennis and badminton and on and on and on, and that was OK. It was really an honor to be asked back. They have given me two 50 year parties, one for football and one for basketball, I did it that long.

D: When you were growing up as a youngster, and living with your brother and mom and dad, you didn't mention that either.

M: Johnny went to the University of Illinois but then came back to ISU. And he was in love and he married Suzanne. And they lived on 8th street where Ron Howe lives. They built that house. And then they moved to Terre Haute on Barton Avenue. And then they moved to Florida and spent the rest of his life there.

And Jim, my husband, and I lived in a house on 8th Street where the Ferris were and then we moved to Terre Haute too. Then we moved back to 1111 Vine Street. Jack and Jane Mainwaring bought that house from the Finkbiners. Then when we bought the house we used it for Jim's photography studio and it worked well for that. But Jim passed away fifteen years ago of renal cell cancer.

D: You mentioned the Manwaring's, I got my first glasses from him and his wife taught at Martinsville for a while. So my dad and Jack would get together and talk school business because he was also a school superintendent.

Is there something in history that has really changed your way of thinking or had a major impact on you?

M: Well, when Vaughn (Mr. Arney) stopped the whole chorus to talk about the "dancing girls". And then when Miss Ernestine would ask "Why can't all the girls dance like you do?".

D: You had a studio in Marshall for a while. And where was that?

M: It was on my front porch. You know, Violet Shaffner, who just passed away, had one mirror in the front of the studio, and it got broke by a baton, she saved me a piece of that mirror and I have it in my home and I think of her every time I put my jewelry on. That was so thoughtful of her and daughter is a very good dancer and a fine teacher also. And I did have her daughter in class too. And that is something that was fun, to have later generations come and dance with me at ISU and they would remember me. But I can't remember all of them sometimes.

D: My wife says that your mother and dad were such a big influence on her. That they both had the philosophy and comment that you can do whatever you set your mind to.

M: And I believe that too.

D: I just wanted to pass that on to you. If you set your mind to something, it might take you awhile to do it, but it can be done.

D: Is there a modern day convenience that you just could not live without?

M: Audio books, always have one in my car, and a good radio to listen to audios on. I hope with all the people that I have mentioned, that there isn't anyone I have forgotten to mention, everyone I have mentioned have given me a wonderful "light" to follow.

D: If you were travelling in, let's say in Europe, and someone mentioned your home town, what would

you tell them about Marshall?

M: Well, you know that happens, and my gift for my Master's Degree my parents sent me on a tour of Europe. Terry Stepp came back from somewhere on a tour with the guys he used to wrestle with, and Terry and Mary Ann were standing talking to some people there and Marshall was mentioned, and the people asked "Is this Marshall Illinois you are talking about?" And Terry said, yes, that is where we are from. I think I would say that this is town that if you smile and speak, Marshall people will speak back to you. And it's a town that is small enough that your kids don't get lost in the school system. We have a beautiful library and great school system. There is one thing I didn't tell you about, it's called the Widow's Club, and I started this group, and Cookie Nash and Polly Enkoff helped me start it, it was a time that women could get together and talk about whatever they needed to talk about. But I would tell people from other countries to come over and see and meet the people of Marshall.

D: Thank you so much Marthann for talking with me today and participating in the Friends of the Library Oral History Project.

M: Thank you for including me. I'm glad we finally got together.