

PHILLIP SCHROEGER TRANSCRIPT

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Maury Miller Interviewer

Transcribed by Donna Duzan, November 2017

M: I am speaking today with Phillip Schroeger for the Friends of the Library oral history project. Phillip I will ask you first when and where were you born?

P: I was born Kansas City, MO 1942. I grew up in Kansas City and lived there until I was 17 years old. After high school I went into the United States Marine Corp and spent four years in Southeast Asia and California. When I came back home I went to work for the Kansas City Power and Light Company and worked there for 18 years. Then I married my wife, Mary Baker, we had five children while we lived in Kansas City, all girls. And after 18 years we bought the Dairy Queen in Marshall from a good friend of mine who I was in the Marine Corp with, Tom Richmond who was from Terre Haute, IN. He was married to Cartha Renner and they owned the Dairy Queen and we purchased it from them and moved to Marshall.

M: I'm going to go back in time for a few questions. Who were your parents?

P: My parents were Martin Schroeger and my mother was Margaret Bolen. My father ran restaurants in Kansas City and was in the insurance business and my mother was a registered nurse.

M: Do you have brothers and sisters?

P: No, I don't.

M: Let's go back to your childhood, what was your neighborhood like?

P: It was a poor neighborhood, it was kept up but the income of the residents was not high. Normal middle income people.

M: What sort of things did you like to do?

P: I played a lot of sports, I went to a catholic grade school and high school which was a military academy, I participated in football, basketball and track.

M: What type of family activities did your family do?

P: Well, I can remember we always went to my grandmother's house on Christmas Eve. That was always a big deal. My dad had seven brothers and sisters and they were all there with their children, my cousins. And in the summer we would have a family reunion type gathering, with baseball and the regular things you would do. It was always outside, I don't think anyone had air conditioning at that time.

M: You said you did sports, did you have any hobbies?

P: Not too much, as a 16 year old I played with cars. The first car I bought was a 1931 model A Ford which I bought for \$50. Sold it later for \$150 and thought I had made a lot of money. I noticed last week on some television show a guy was wanting \$40,000 for a remade car.

M: How old were you when you married?

P: I was 21.

M: How did you meet Mary?

P: I met Mary when I was in high school. When I graduated she was a nurse in one of the hospitals and we dated briefly before I went into the Marine Corp and was gone for four years and when I came home we started dating again.

M: What was your occupation then?

P: I was a cable splicer for the power and light company. I worked on high voltage cables.

M: And how did it come about that you came to Marshall?

P: Well, as I said, Tom Richmond was a good friend of mine in the Marine Corp and he married Cartha Renner from Marshall and we visited back and forth for years. And it so happened that they were the owners of the Dairy Queen here and they wanted to sell it and we were wanting to own our own business. So we purchased it from them and moved to Marshall in 1979.

M: And then how long did you operate the Dairy Queen?

P: We did that for a little over ten years. After we sold it, I went to work for several of the car companies doing sales and financing and insurance. And after that I went on the road driving semis. I drove for a company at Teutopolis for about seven years. And then retired.

M: And how do you spend your time now?

P: We spend six months of the year in Brownsville, Texas. We have a small flea market business we run down there. We have been doing that for 3 or four years. We've been going to Texas for about fifteen years and have been doing the business for 3 or 4 years.

M: Would you say that in your lifetime that there has been a person or event that has a major influence on your life?

P: No, no specific person or event that I can think of.

M: What historical events stand out in your life?

P: I was in Thailand and Laos in the very beginning of the Vietnam War and that probably affected me a lot. Mary and I do a lot of work with veterans now. We belong to the Patriot Guard in Illinois and

Texas and we do a lot of veteran's funerals.

M: What modern conveniences have made an impact in your life?

P: I would say cell phone and computers. It is on the verge of being rude, but we would have fifteen people sitting around the dinner table and ten of them would have their cell phone out. I remark that during dinner it would be nice to have all cell phones off.

M: I have one last question for you, if you were talking to someone not from Marshall, how would you describe Marshall and how would you explain why you live here?

P: Marshall is a small, although not real small, town. It is small enough that people are very friendly, we have many acquaintances, probably know 80 to 90 percent of the people around town. And yet its small but still has the modern conveniences that you would find in a larger city. You can buy pretty much whatever you want or need. It is a well-kept community, the lawns are well kept. The thing that impressed me when we first moved here is that it looked like everybody had washed their windows !!

M: Well, thank you very much Phil for talking to me and participating in the oral history project of the Friends of the Library.