

Maureen and Mike

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**Oral History Number: 463-001**  
**Interviewee: Sharon Huntley Kahn**  
**Interviewer: Donna McCrea**  
**Date of Interview: July 10, 2018**

Donna McCrea: This is Donna McCrea, Head of Archives and Special Collections at the University of Montana. Today is July 10th of 2018. Today I'm interviewing Sharon Huntley Kahn about her father Chet Huntley. I'll note that the focus of the interview will really be on things that you know about Chet Huntley that other people would maybe not have known: things that have not been made public already or don't appear in many of the biographical materials and articles about him. Also, I'm hoping that you'll share some stories that you have about him and his life. So I'm going to begin by saying I know that you grew up in Los Angeles. Can you maybe start there and talk about your memories about your father and your time in L.A.?

Sharon Kahn: Yes, Donna. Before we begin, I just want to say how nice it is to work with you. From the beginning our first phone conversations, I think at least a year and a half ago, you've always been so welcoming and interested, and it's wonderful to be here and I'm really happy to share inside stories with you. There's a lot of them. So yeah, my sister and I grew up in Los Angeles. We were born there. My father came down from the University of Washington, worked for a little while in Portland and ended up in L.A. because that's where all the action was. So my sister and I were born in Los Angeles.

Los Angeles, you know, in the '40s was just a wonderful place for a kid to grow up. I mean the weather's fantastic. It was much more of a small town, and in a lot of ways it was sort of an industry town because all the big studios were there. So you're surrounded by people that are in the movie-making industry. As a child growing up, I just remember these parties, most of all, that my parents used to have [laughs], and I just thought, well, everybody grew up this way. But I mean, they were such interesting people, such creative people, such glamorous people. There was always somebody playing the piano. There were martinis being served. There were swimming pools in backyards. We just grew up having a great time.

And as a child for me, I was just like totally free. I could roller skate down the middle of the street. We played softball in the middle of the street. We climbed trees. Even the L.A. River ran about a block away and I'd go down and built like a Tom Sawyer-type of raft and go down this tiny little river with friends and spy on people in their backyards. I don't remember my parents, either one of them, being very strict disciplinarians, but they really taught us manners. Through I think a lot of different maybe situations taught us a sense of ethics—what's right, what's wrong.

Course being born in 1940, this is World War Two. I strongly remember when the war was over and the celebration. My father put us in the car we went down to Hollywood—Hollywood and Vine—and he put me on his shoulders and we walked through this massive crush of people down Hollywood Boulevard. [laughs] We went to this place and had...right next to the Chinese

Grauman Theatre and it was an ice cream place, and I had hot fudge ice cream. This is late at night after all this excitement. I went home, and I was very sick to my stomach—too much excitement. To this day I cannot eat ice cream late at night. But I just figure I had a great childhood. Everything was happy and free and just fun.

Then something happened, and everything changed. What happened was Eugene McCarthy. He came riding to town, and Hollywood changed. All of a sudden these people that were fun-loving and having parties, when they got together there was always silence between them or when they were talking they were talking in whispers. The kids would come up, you know, and all of a sudden they'd go quiet. So as a kid, you knew something was wrong. Something had happened, and you couldn't figure out what it was. Also, my father and mother took me aside and my sister and said, "Don't get anybody's car." Don't do this, don't do that. "If somebody comes up and starts talking..." very odd sort of fearful stuff. I remember one night they went out, and these boys in the neighborhood they had the straws and they were shooting peas through the straws at our windows. Well, my sister and I thought it was an attack of some kind. So I remember crawling under the piano—the baby grand piano—and calling my parents where they were and they came rushing back. Well, it was just boys in the neighborhood having fun. But even for kids growing up during the McCarthy years, it was scary.

DM: Can you elaborate a little bit on why, why Chet Huntley's family would have been impacted by McCarthyism?

SK: Well, he was in the news. He was a news commentator. It wasn't just movie stars. It was definitely radio-television people. And they had a lot of friends. It just seemed like everybody, as I would say, was in that sort of industry, and there was a lot of censorship. My father at the time worked for ABC. He had gone down from Portland, Oregon, and took a job at CBS, originally, in L.A., then went to ABC. At ABC during the McCarthy years, my father was called a Communist, and there were these people calling in—these women calling in—and saying that they wanted him off the air that he was a Communist. A lot of women were calling in all the time, and ABC was really sort of wavering. My father found out that it was a group of women—a very small group of women—but they made them sound like there were hundreds of them. And he sued them, and he won and he donated the money to some charity or something.

But I always thought later when he left ABC and went to New York with NBC that he was kind of like, if you guys had done a better job of sticking with me and being more supportive I might not have taken this job. Well, good thing he did take that job.

But there was another situation that was really horrifying when my parents...I knew there was a friend—one of their very good friends—that went missing. So there was a lot of talk every day, "Have they found him yet? Has he shown up? Has he called in?" His wife was just beside herself and the young children. Two weeks went by, and I remember, as a kid, I used to build these little cities out of mud right underneath this window. There was a faucet there, and I used to build canals and open the faucet and the water would go down the canals. I'm building this

whole city and I hear my father's voice from the window up above in their bedroom. My father never came home in the middle of the day. We never saw him in the middle of the day because he had a very late broadcast. For him to come home in the middle of the day meant that something was wrong. I remember him telling my mother they found him, and this guy—this friend of theirs—had crawled under his house and had shot himself. The only way that they knew something was wrong is that there was an odor and his wife called in the exterminator, whatever, and found him. So I don't know if my parents ever knew that I heard this. I certainly didn't go running in there crying. I just remember hearing it, and I'll never forget that whole thing: where the window was, building my little mud fort city. I was even actually by one of those things in the basement where there's sort of a screen where if you're going to do that that's where the person would have crawled. So that's a very...that stands out hugely in my mind.

So, you know, my whole childhood there was really pretty positive. But that stands out as a big influence in my life. How those people all handled themselves and which ones stood out as being highly admirable and which ones didn't. I've seen plays and stories and everything about that since, but I don't remember any of them. I just remember a whole group of friends that shut down sort of.

DM: Interesting experience for a child and a teenager to go through. You mentioned that at one point I guess you and your family moved to the East Coast. When did that happen?

SK: Well I graduated from high school in 1957 from Van Nuys High School in the valley, and my father was brought to New York City by NBC the year before. So NBC had John Cameron Swayze on who was the nightly news guy, and he was up against Edward R. Murrow. CBS was walking away with all the awards and everything—the audience. So NBC looked around the country and they saw this guy in L.A. that was really good, and they brought him to New York and hired him. Well, he didn't become coupled with David Brinkley until...I don't know if it was a couple years later, but during one of the conventions, when they had the idea of putting these two people together anyway.

Anyway...so yeah, they moved to New York. Great time, right, to bring a kid to New York City in between their junior and senior year of high school. I was miserable. I was definitely an L.A. kind of girl. Going to the beach, convertibles, hamburgers, miniature golf, gobs of friends—fabulous. Here I was in New York City—hot, humid, no friends, not one friend. I was miserable. So I cried. Almost every night I cried. Finally, my father called me in to their bedroom and at night and said, “I can't stand this anymore. What is it you want.”

I said, “I want to go back to Los Angeles and finish high school.”

I had a friend whose parents had said, if she wants to come back she can live with us. So I did. Then they said when I graduated from high school, “All right you're coming East. You have to come to school in the East Coast.” They found the school called Briarcliff which was an all-girl

private school about an hour of New York. Again, it was just... [laughs] It was not a place I liked, and it was a two-year school. They thought, well, this is great for her because then she can go to a design school or Parsons [School of Design] or something like that. That's what she'd really like, but she needs the two years of liberal arts. Well, it was a big mistake and they had a father-daughter weekend, and my father came up and you know he's a Montana guy, right? I remember him sort of Mr. Nattie, you know, probably sort of wool jacket of some kind or whatever, and all these other fathers are in their double-breasted, navy blue blazers and white gabardine slacks and were talking about their yachts in the Mediterranean. Well, obviously that was not my father, and I think he saw this school and the kids I was going to college with and you know...Anyway, I think I've always had a sense of timing. So the next day he left. The next day I drove to New York, and I said, "Daddy, I really don't like that school."

He said, "Yeah, I can see that."

So I said, "I'd really like to transfer." So I did. I went back to the West Coast, went to University of Oregon. By then he was really well-known. Everybody knew Chet Huntley, and Huntley-Brinkley was in everybody's living room every night of the week. At some time someone said to me, "Sharon, do you realize that your father and David are the most famous people in the world? They are heard and seen more than anybody in the world." That really took me back. I thought, wait a minute, that can't be true. But when you think about at that time that not everybody had a television set, especially in the world, and then not everybody that was on television was on every single night for a half hour. Anyway...then it went to an hour. But anyway, that was really true. So wherever I went with my father, it was like he was Uncle Chet. He was in the living room, so of course, he was Uncle Chet. He wasn't just my father, he was their uncle or something. So if I got to have lunch with my father, which was very seldom, we'd be sitting there in a restaurant and some people—some couple—would come up from Kansas City and say, "Hi, Chet, we really love your show," and blah, blah, blah, and he'd invite them to sit down. There went my lunch with my father. But he was very approachable and welcoming and interested in other people.

DM: Did you feel that he was approachable for you? Did you feel like you could talk with him about what you were experiencing as a teenager? About what you were experiencing in the world?

SK: That's kind of an interesting question: yes and no. I think my mother...growing up with my father, my greatest sort of memories of him...If there's a classic memory, it's of him typing away at a typewriter with his pipe in a dish right beside him and that we needed to be quiet. "Your father's working." So no, we didn't approach him a lot. Then he would, like, "Okay kids, let's get in the car," and he take us to the amusement park. But other than that, I would say that we kind of left him...Then four years in L.A., he had an 11 o'clock news broadcast. So during the week, he would get up later in the morning after we had gone to school. He'd get up later in the morning go to work, and he didn't come home until after the 10:00 news broadcast. So we were already asleep in bed, so we didn't see him until the weekends. [pauses] I think if I had a

problem, I would definitely feel like I could go to him and say, “Daddy, I really would like your advice on this.” I don't remember ever doing it, except when I wanted something. [laughs] “I don't like this school. I want to go back to the West Coast.” Yeah.

DM: So you mentioned then that you did go back to the West Coast, and that your father continued his life in broadcasting. Do you talk at all about any of your memories from that time? Any stories to share, or anything that stands out to you?

SK: Well, I'll tell you, it was really fun as Chet Huntley's daughter to walk into the RCA Building, which is something in itself because of the great Diego Rivera, Art Nouveau works of art on the wall. It was such an impressive building and go to the NBC elevators, and you have to stop and just say I'm Chet Huntley's daughter and you could go right up the elevator to where the studios were. I remember doing this. I would always go into the ladies room first and make sure that I looked really extra special great, because I had this crush on one of the younger producers of the show, and then I loved watching the show. I just loved watching the monitors and all of that. I didn't do it that often, but yeah. Or wherever you went with him, it was always an honor. And again you know he was always just such a nice guy.

[laughs] To see him in the morning was a very different thing than seeing him on the news. He woke up in the morning early, went down, got the papers. This is at their brownstone in New York City on East 69th St. and had this old blue terrycloth robe that I don't know how ancient it was, but it was rather disgusting, and would sit on a stool in the kitchen, turn on the Today Show, read the newspapers with a cup of coffee. Again, if you came into the room, you might say, “Good morning, Daddy,” but you didn't talk to him...I mean this was like...Anyway it was, it was really wonderful being his daughter.

DM: This is probably jumping ahead a little bit, but one of the photographs that you brought in the materials that you donated was a photo of you and your father at the 1968 convention in Chicago. Were there a lot of times that you went with him to business or you met him at a place where he was doing work, other than the studio that you mentioned earlier, other than the RCA Building?

SK: No, not really, but that was a biggie. That made up for everything. That was the convention of all conventions—the '68 convention in Chicago—because all hell broke loose. There were all these demonstrators in the streets, and there was tear gas and there were riot police. It was really, it was really upsetting for everybody. Some of these newsmen were being grabbed and thrown into vans and being taken away. It was like something you expected to see in Russia, not in Chicago.

But I was there...My father invited me there, and along with Tippy, my father's...step-mother [Lewis Tipton String, Chet Huntley's second wife]. We did things during the day, but we also, we went to the convention. We went to the convention floor, and it was a real eye opener what was going on. I don't think there's been another convention like that since.

But those were the '60s. I mean, we're in 2018 right now, and this looks pretty bad what's going on in our country right now, but you have to go back to those years. There was a lot going on in those years too. Riots in the street. The black community was everywhere and burning down their own cities. There were the space shots. There was a war in Vietnam. There were a whole lot of big stories. Yeah.

So I think when, one of the things at the time when my father was with ABC, I mean, NBC that happened that sort of shows the maverick part of him is that they—news people, news commentators or journalists—were trying to figure out if they should join a union, join this certain union. It was AFTRA [American Federation of Television and Radio Artists], and my father was very against this union. He didn't think that that was the union for them. He thought it was actors and I think he even used the word “jugglers”, and he crossed the picket line. I think Frank McGee did too. But they were the only two, and that's really not a very popular thing to do. I mean David Brinkley didn't cross the picket lines and all the other people. But if my father felt that something wasn't right or he believed in something, he just went to the wall with it. He didn't really care.

I think that's another thing that I don't remember him ever lecturing me on stuff like that. But it's just built in. These are the things you learn from your parents when they demonstrate that kind of thing. People have come up to me all through the years when they find out who my father is or was, and say different things. Mostly it's all, “Your dad was so great.” I mean, Hungarian people, “Oh, your father really represented us and told the truth about the revolution in Hungary.” I remember one person coming up to me one time in a big hotel, I think, in Rochester, New York, and saying he was a union guy—very upset that my father had crossed the picket lines and that was just something you never did.

DM: You mentioned the New Jersey farm that they owned and some memories that you had spending time there with him and with your children. Do you have any stories that you'd like to share about that?

SK: Those were just great times. I mean, why would somebody like my father, who worked hard all week long and then get in a car and drive that night, Friday nights—Tippy would pick him up—to New Jersey, near the Delaware [River], and then have 800 head of black Angus cows in a feedlot operation? But that was his way of, in a way, getting back to Montana. He had a farm manager, of course, but we lived...My husband and I were living in Newark...Well, not in Newark, but my husband was a branch manager for Xerox in Newark, New Jersey, and we lived in Summit so we were very close. We would go out a lot of different weekends with these two little blonde, towheaded kids that my father just loved to see and loved spoiling them. I remember these shots of these kids in their rubber boots going out in the feedlot, their blond hair and all these black Angus cows in this feed lot, and there's some great pictures from that.

DM: These are your kids that you're talking about?

SK: My kids, yeah. My son and my daughter.

DM: How old were they when you were doing that, do you remember?

SK: I think Lindsay (?) my daughter was probably about eight, maybe Rick was 10, 11. Great ages. Rick had a birthday out there and we drove out from Summit with all these little kids—these friends of his—and my father had this...What did you call that game where you had to go around and find things?

DM: Like a scavenger hunt?

SK: Yes! A scavenger hunt. He had planned these things—this scavenger hunt—for these little kids, 10 year olds, with clues along the way, and he'd sort of help them determine the clues. Then it was time for the cake and opening the presents, and he gave this box—like shoe box—wrapped up with a chain around it to my son and helped him open it up. Well, guess what was inside the box? A snake. [laughs]

DM: A live snake?

SK: Yes, a live snake that he had found somewhere in the garden or something. It was a...It wasn't that big, but I mean, it was a snake. No, we had a lot of great times there, and for him it was a time to really relax. He watched...well, I don't know if you could say watched, but he was always watching...had football games on. But there was a couch, and we would always remember him. We'd go in, and there he'd be sound asleep with a game on. Those were a lot of years. But I think what started happening because of that farm, he really wanted to get back to Montana. It just sort of whet his appetite. He would come out to Montana. He would fish, see his parents, and I think that's when he decided to retire. I think that the day in and day out pressure of presenting the news, it's a lot every single day for ten-plus years. So then he came West.

DM: And had a vision. [laughs]

SK: Certainly had a vision. Well, along one of those trips, somebody took him up the Gallatin and showed him this gorgeous snowcapped mountain and suggested wouldn't this be a great resort up here and that's where it all started. So my father put together this entity of corporate investors, and that's how Big Sky happened. Thank god he lived long enough to see it all happen—open up. The ski trails were open—just. And we came up right...like three weeks before he died. That was the last time we saw him, and it was a great time for me to have. And this is sort of like answering one of your questions, did you ever...when did you approach him, or could you talk to him? Because he came...he was very ill, and he took a lot of naps. He slept a lot. He woke up from a nap, and I remember sitting with my sister<sup>1</sup> near the kitchen in their

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<sup>1</sup> Correction: Sharon was sitting with her step-mother, Tippy, not her sister.

house at Big Sky that they had built on this hillside. She was talking about the floor wax that she was using and blah, blah, blah. He came in and sat in a chair. He was very gray and not good not in good health, and I was listening to her. I thought, I cannot sit here and listen to this and have my father sitting there and this may be the last time I'll see him. So I walked over to him—got up out of my chair—and it was really hard to do, and say, “Daddy, I really would like to talk to you.”

“Sure.” So we went into his den and we closed the door, and with my heart beating I said, “I want to tell you the things you've taught me.” [voice breaks] I mean, even now I'm emotional talking about it. But I knew I had to do this. I said, “You taught me that nobody is better than anybody else. I've seen you. I've seen you in black tie. I've seen you go to you know the Plaza Hotel. I've seen you at work. I've seen you in New York City. I've also seen you in Montana fishing the Gallatin, the Rosebud, the Yellowstone. I've seen you go into saloons with everyday common ranchers, and you're always the same. So you taught me to treat people equally and to have respect for everybody.” I don't really remember that was the most significant thing, but I went through sort of a litany that I had sort of memorized and just had hoped that I got enough nerve or that the time presented itself for me to tell him what he meant to me and what he had given to me.

DM: Talk a little bit about...a little bit more about what you think he gave to you in terms of are there are there ethics or ideology or ideas that you carry that you think came directly from him or came from your association with his surroundings or with his family.

SK: You know I think a lot of it has to do with what other people tell you. It certainly didn't come from him telling me how great he was. So it's the lessons that came to me in terms of his fine sense of journalism and ethics in journalism and everything, I think just came to me through the years from other people. I know he was given a lot of awards, but he didn't talk about that to us. When he was inducted into the Television Hall of Fame, he had already died and Tippy gave the award...accepted the award then, gave an acceptance speech. So it's one of those sort of father-daughter things, or father-child things, that you sort of absorb these qualities. You don't know how you got them, why they're there, but I think it has a lot to do [with] the way you choose your friends through life and the things that you belong to. I'm having a hard time, quite frankly, right now staying with some of my friends who are siding with a certain political agenda that my father would be horrified about. And some people can do it. I oftentimes wonder right now...Well, I don't even have to wonder. I know what he would say. So I'm lucky that really a lot of my friends I don't have that problem with. My husband has some friends that I have trouble with. [laughs]

So, I don't know, in terms of, I also think, being a gentleman. He was a true gentleman, and here's a guy that was homesteaded with his parents and his grandparents in the middle of nowhere in Eastern Montana, very harsh circumstances. Went to a one room schoolhouse, ends up going to a university, graduating. Ends up being Mr. Chet Huntley, starting from nothing and nowhere. But those are the lessons that must have been taught early on, not just

to him but to a lot of people. I think the unusual thing is a lot of people who become highly successful lose those things for some reason or another and start believing in their own press releases or something, and he never did. He always was just who he was.

DM: I like that. You've told me a couple stories since I met you about him and about memories that you have of him. I'm wondering if you could talk at all about his relationship with David Brinkley just if there's anything that you knew as a family member or stories that you have that would relate to that relationship at all that you would want to share.

SK: Isn't it funny that their names are so much alike? [laughs] I mean Huntley, Brinkley. I think I showed you yesterday two lions or cougars or whatever they were that some guy named Huntley and Brinkley. I remember Carol Burnett once sang a song at some big thing "I'd like to be the hyphen between Huntley and Brinkley." [laughs] David and my father were very different from each other, and I think David was probably much more of a private person. I know that he was. It's interesting that they both had fathers that were in the railroad business. I didn't know that for a long time. They had—David and my father—had a great deal of respect for each other, and I think that carried them through. But there were differences in where they came from. I think one thing is that my father was from Montana, and I think there was a sense...there was kind of an East Coast elitism in some ways. So a lot of the Eastern guys, let's put it that way, I think had a sense that Chet was always a little bit on the country boy side of things. You know they respected him for who he was, what he did. But I always had a sense that there was a little something there that is kind of... [pauses] we're dealing with that today. The people on the coast are known as elitists and everybody in the middle of the country is having a problem. So I think there was a little bit of that there. I'm not sure that existed so much between David and my father, but it was there between other journalists, I think. I think I remember talking to this with Tippy. Other than that, they had a great, great partnership. And David went on. He went on. He stayed with NBC, then he went to ABC for some time. Yeah.

Oh, so I have a few stories if you're interested.

DM: Yeah, let's hear them.

SK: Well, some of these are stories that my husband asks me to say, you know, every dinner party, "Sharon, tell them the story about blah, blah, blah." But some of them are really quite interesting. So I'm thinking of the one that involved Dan Rather. When my father had left NBC, moved to Montana, was building Big Sky, and just after it had opened, he found out that Dan Rather was there and, I think, fishing or something. So my father and Tippy invited him up to have dinner, and Dan and my father are sitting in front of this big rock fireplace having their scotches and talking. My father says, "How did you get involved in this industry, Dan?"

He says, "Well, Chet, that's an interesting story. I graduated from college in Texas and was going to go to New York and go to some fabulous job right away. I have these interviews set up. I thought I was really hot stuff, and I got there and within a few days, appointments were

canceled. Some people were very brief with me, I had one...Nothing was coming out of it," he said, "and I had one last interview." He said, "It was supposed to be, I think, 15 minutes, and," he said, "I went in there and I sat down, and it ended up being more than a half hour, maybe even close to an hour." He said, "Out of that interview, I got these great recommendations, and it ends up I got a job in New York."

My father said, "Well, who was that?"

He said, "It was you, Chet."

I mean, it's such a great story because my father did that with so many young people. Was always welcoming, he was always inviting...inviting them, "Yes, come up and see me." So for him to even forget that Dan Rather was one of those young people that came to see him. But I've always considered Dan Rather and Peter Jennings and Tom Brokaw as the second tier of anchors and Chet Huntley, David Brinkley, and Walter Cronkite as the first anchors. So it's kind of a passing of the torch story.

DM: Right, right. That's a lovely story.

SK: Yeah, there's another Dan Rather story that I don't have maybe all the facts quite right, but it involves Dan Rather and I guess a lesson that my father taught me because it was a...and this is this is well documented, but there was an affiliate station convention in the country and the President Nixon was the keynote speaker. And Dan Rather gets up in the audience, and when he stands up to address the president, there is applause. The President says to Dan Rather, "Are you running for something, Dan?"

Dan Rather shoots back, "No, are you, Mr. President?" In those days maybe, that would have been something that would be more acceptable now, I don't know. But in those days, you just didn't do that. It was seen as very rude and disrespectful, and it went...it was everywhere in the press that Dan Rather did this. I remember calling my father the next day and saying, "Wasn't that great?" because Nixon was not one of my favorite people. I said, "Wasn't that great, Daddy? Wasn't that great?"

He said, "Sharon, that was not great. A newsman should never be the news himself." So another lesson there. Another, sort of, ethical lesson.

DM: You mentioned Nixon, and you've also mentioned a story or memory that you have about him getting on the White House—

SK: Enemies list.

DM: Yeah. Can you tell that a little bit?

SK: Yeah. [pauses] Of course, nobody knew that there was even such a thing until the Watergate hearings, and then I remember being in San Francisco and hearing...I was at my sister's house and I was in the kitchen, but we had the Watergate hearings on in the living room and all of a sudden hearing my father's...something about Chet Huntley who had retired and left and gone to Montana and what would they be...zooming into the living room. And lo and behold there was Dean talking about this White House enemies list and being asked who was on it and, among other people, Chet Huntley was on it.

Well, the way he got on the list, of course, became an enemy is because right before or during the time my father was retiring, so it was really weeks before he was...his final broadcast. He was going to do a story on migrant workers in the South, and *Life*...a reporter from *Life* magazine called. *Life* magazine at the time was a magazine...I think it actually sort of stopped publication for a while and then started publishing again. The guy calls my father, and said, "We'd like to do an interview with you, Chet, as you're leaving."

He said, "I'm really busy, but you can come on the airplane with me down to the South."

The guy said, "Fine." So they did an interview in the airplane. My father was down South somewhere doing his broadcast, and the journalist, the reporter, flew back to New York. So my father gets back, and about a week later, this reporter from *Life* magazine calls and says—it was after the broadcast—and he says, "Chet, hey, hey I'm over here at Charley O's. Come on over and have a drink with me." So he did. Everything that was said to the reporter in the bar at Charley O's that night after the broadcast was what went in the article in *Life* magazine, in which my father said it scared him to have a man like Nixon in the White House. Well, you just...a reporter even if he's asked in the middle of an interview that this is off limits here what I'm about to say, then it is, it's off limits. You always respect that. For something to be said a week later in a bar was really, really bad—

DM: And then appear in the article.

SK: And then appear in the article. Of course, I think that they were going for sensationalism because it was a magazine that was going under. Anyway, my father had to call Nixon and apologize. But that's how he got on what...the White House enemies list. One, maybe one of the reasons, but certainly it had a lot to do with it.

DM: Was he politically active then after he retired, when he felt that no longer being a journalist to be—

SK: No. He was never—

DM: He kept his opinions to himself.

SK: He didn't believe that one should be. In the first place, he was a registered Independent.

He didn't think that you should be a Republican or a Democrat and report the news. He really felt that you need to stay separate. You are reporting the news and, no. He's always so kind to people because I remember going to certain dinner parties that they would have in New York at their townhouse and there'd be several people there and you'd be sitting in the living room and I think everybody kind of wanted to impress him or they'd ask him...They also wanted to know what he thought about different things, but they always had an opinion themselves. And I remember he would always say, "Well, how do you feel about that, Jim?" Jim would say something, and then someone else...he'd say, "Ah, yeah, you're right about that. What about you, Audrey? You have some feelings..." He'd draw everybody out, listen to everybody, and then he would say what he thought. Now okay, I try to do that. In fact, I'm terrible with my husband when we have dinner parties, I say, "You are not the center of attention." [laughs] They're not here to listen to you. What you're supposed to do as a host is that you have to bring other people out. You ask them questions and let them dominate and tell the stories. So it's very funny, but that's probably something that my father taught me. Ask other people.

DM: Listen. He was a good listener obviously.

SK: Yeah, yeah.

DM: A good synthesizer of information. Yeah.

Is there anything else that you would want people to know about your father, or...whether it's something that they've heard before that you would want to reinforce or something that you would know as a daughter or family member that other people wouldn't know that you just would want to have on the record?

SK: Well, he was a rascal.

DM: Really?

SK: Oh, yes. I can't tell you all those stories [laughs]

DM: At least not on the record.

SK: At least not on the record, no. But that's one of, I think, the more delightful things about him. Maybe while I've been talking, it makes him sound like this god or something, all perfect. [unintelligible] in my estimation being a rascal I think is a delightful characteristic. I'm a good friend of Jim Lehrer's and have been on vacation with Jim and Kate, and I see the same things in Jim. In fact, I see a lot in Jim Lehrer that is very much like my father in terms of being ethical and a gentleman and everything, but also a rascal. I mean basically, it's someone who really enjoys having a good time and who doesn't mind playing jokes here and there. So maybe we should leave it at that.

I mean, as a kid he would do certain things sometimes to sort of scare us. You know, just silly things. But he loved...I mean, for that reason I think he sort of loved kids because he could really joke around with them and do these silly things.

DM: Do you have any examples?

SK: You know, I can't—

DM: The snake in the box was a really good one. [laughs]

SK: Okay, there you go. The snake in the box. [pauses] No, I can't. But there's part of him that's sort of revealed himself going through all the archival stuff. Some of what I brought to you but also in this documentary that I made last year called *Homesteads to Huntley* is that he was in drama. He was in plays. He had a lead in these plays in high school and even in this school that he went to in Seattle. What was the name of that school? The Cornish, the Cornish School [Cornish College of Arts]. He got a scholarship to go to the Cornish School. That's how he ended up in Seattle before he went to University of Washington. I think that's where a lot of that...I mean, if you like to act in plays, I think he liked to act out at times too. So, no, he was a lot of fun.

DM: Well, thank you very much for taking the time today.

SK: Thank you, Donna. Thank you again. I'm very pleased to be here and be in this wonderful Mike Mansfield Library, which Mike Mansfield was certainly a person that my father respected and delighted in. As I remember Mike Mansfield was a bit of a rascal too.

DM: [laughs] Stories for another time.

SK: Yes, stories for another time.

DM: Good. Thank you, Sharon.

SK: Thank you.

[End of Interview]