

“Chatty” Hattie Leeper oral history interview 2

Interview Conducted by
Christina Wright
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Title: “Chatty” Hattie Leeper oral history interview 2, 2006 December 11

Description: In the second of three interviews, “Chatty” Hattie Leeper discusses her career with AM radio station WGIV in Charlotte, North Carolina as a DJ during the 1940s-1960s. Mrs. Leeper describes the mix of music and talk played at the station, the types of programming throughout the day, and how the station featured both national popular music and local artists. She describes how the station’s employees and listeners were diverse, but the station was characterized as predominantly black, particularly in the early days. While advertisers on WGIV in the beginning were all black-owned businesses, Mrs. Leeper describes how white merchants soon began advertising on the station as well. She discusses the service mission of the radio station in the community and memorable guests on her program, ranging from local Charlotte residents to Ike and Tina Turner. Mrs. Leeper also recounts how she got her start as a DJ while a sophomore in high school.

Biography: Hattie Leeper was around 76 years old at the time of interview, which took place at her home in Charlotte, North Carolina. She was born in Edgemoor, South Carolina in 1930. She attended Central Piedmont Community College, earned a Master’s in Education Administration, and was employed as a disc jockey at WGIV, WRPL, and WAYS radio stations; the chair of the broadcasting department at Gaston College; and the founder and owner of Chatty School of Communication.

Keywords: Leeper, Hattie, 1930-; WGIV (Radio station : Charlotte, N.C.); Disc jockeys; Popular music radio stations; African American radio stations; Radio broadcasting; Radio broadcasters; Radio audiences; Radio broadcasting--Social aspects; Radio advertising; North Carolina--Charlotte; Interviews (Sound recordings); Oral histories

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Interview History:

Interviewer: Christina Wright

Transcriber: Kelvin Allen

Editors: Mary Screen and Rita Johnston

Setting Description: The home of Hattie Leeper in Charlotte, North Carolina

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Related Collections Note:

Related Interviews Note: Hattie Leeper oral history interview 1, 2006 December 11. J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; Hattie Leeper oral history interview 3, 2007 January 19. J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Transcript Notes: HL: Hattie Leeper
CW: Christina Wright

“Chatty” Hattie Leeper Oral History Interview 1 Transcript

Minidisc 1 begins.

CW: Today is December 12, 2006. This is Christina Wright interviewing Hattie Leeper, more popularly known as “Chatty Hattie,” for the UNC Charlotte Oral History Archive. We’re at 2412 Twin Field Drive, Charlotte NC, 28216. Hattie Leeper or “Chatty Happy,” sorry, “Chatty Hattie,” was the first black female radio announcer in North Carolina. She began her career in radio in 1948 at WGIV in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she was on the air for over twenty years. After WGIV she was associated with two of the local radio stations, WRPL and Big Ways WAYS. In her later career, she’s focused on education. She held a position of chair of broadcasting department at Gaston College from 1985 to 1998, after which she founded her now, sorry, her proprietary school, Chatty’s School of Communication here in Charlotte. She’s also taught in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. Mrs. Leeper has been honored many times. In 1989 she was inducted into the Black Radio Hall of Fame in Washington D.C. In 2000 she was also inducted into North Carolina Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame. She’s been presented with the key to the city of Charlotte by two mayors, and she’s been a National Officer of the National Association of Radio and TV Announcers. And we were talking yesterday about your early life, and we started to talk about your first years at WGIV when you were just a fourteen-year-old girl, and you organized the place for them, and made record success if one answered the phones. And I wondered if you could talk about how did a radio station like WGIV, how--what was it like in 1948 in a radio station? How did it work, the kind of mechanics of it?

HL: Well, it was very primitive I will assure you, because it was back in the day before technology kicked in. We didn’t have the luxury of computers back in the day. We just had manual typewriters and we had the old dial telephones where you dial the numbers when you call. And there were no area codes, you know, because we hadn’t grown to that extent. And the station was in a little run-down building, it was just a little flat building, nothing elaborate, very plain, broken chairs, broken desks, everything was makeshift and we would take it and make something out of it. And we would sound over the microphone as if we were in luxury, but I was sometimes sitting on a old wooden drink cart. Back in the days, you used to have wooden carts for canned drinks and bottled drinks. And when they were empty, we would just sit on the edge of one of those for a chair. And was very happy just to be there and doing a piece of work. So we were very, very, very basic, I mean basic, and happy. Because that's all we knew, and we knew we had to. And we were in the red, you know, we were not affluent as a radio station, so we had to take what we had. And we had good investors, we had a good board of, of members that would put money into the station and as long as they were making payroll, they felt very good for this month, you know, or this year. As long as they were making enough to pay the overhead and pay the salaried DJs, they called them, disc jockeys, and then they started later calling them radio announcers, and then commentators, and then you know it just kept getting more luxury, more luxury, and it was very, very hard times back in the day. Our transmitter that kept us on the air was a low powered transmitter and it malfunctioned quite a bit, it would blow out a tube or something. If a storm would come through, lightning bolt or something, it would knock us off the air and we'd have to drive all the way up to Tennessee or somewhere to get a tube for the transmitter. And--

CW: Where was the transmitter located?

HL: It was located here in Charlotte out off of, on the west side of Charlotte on a little strip of land and we would have to go there. The engineer would, and sometimes we would follow him out to the transmitter to look to see if we could hand him an instrument or something that he might need. But we were so fortunate that we never got hurt, because we didn't know anything about climbing up that long pole to go up in there to connect, you know, up anything, but it was a many a day we were all out there because we wanted back on the air. We, you know, we, just panicked. But it was interesting, but we had some struggles back in the day.

CW: Right. How wide a field could you transmit to from that?

HL: Our range was very limited, we were directional. The transmitter signal was directional. In the day time, going north we probably didn't go past Concord. Going in the direction of, Belmont, Gastonia, we covered that fairly well but beyond Gastonia we didn't range, you know, we didn't go down as far as Gaffney or that area. Then going north, let's see, no more like south, we could be heard clearer seemingly going toward Waxhaw and the Monroe area. Now these were the daytime spots that we covered, and going north like Huntersville, up in that area we beamed in there really good, Lake Norman really good, but very faintly did we reach Mooresville. There were certain periods of the day and the day parts you could reach Mooresville, but not real good. But we did get into just the borderline of Mooresville, so that was pretty much your area, because we were an AM station and you see, FM would range much stronger but AM, you were limited and very directional and at the time that we first started we were just a sun up to sun down station. Meaning by five o'clock in the mornings if the sun was up, we could sign on the air and then when it got dark in the evening around four thirty, five o'clock, you know it's dark, we have to sign off. Then the closer it got to springtime, when the hours stretched, we could stay on till about six, six thirty in the evening.

CW: So your day varied according to the length of the day?

HL: Of the day.

CW: Of the time of year.

HL: Yes, and then I remember we grew from that into ranging our transmitter signal. We started covering a bigger area, and I remember them stretching our time, our hours. And we started staying on until midnight and oh, we thought we had arrived then. I mean we were just as happy as could be, because you could hear us up until midnight, twelve or one o'clock. And then you know, you'd sign off the air and then start back the next morning at five, five thirty. But we used to sign off at midnight. Yeah.

CW: Was your range a lot wider in the evening hours as well?

HL: Seemingly after, maybe five, we could pick up a little bit better range after five in the evening. Yeah.

CW: Who did you see as your main listeners within this area?

HL: Our listener base, believe it or not was very broad. It was broader than we realized because we were considered, you know, the urban station, meaning the black station. But gosh, we had so many listeners from Myers Park High School, you know, predominantly white schools because we had an integrated staff. And one of our announcers was a Myers Park student, and he was young like I was, he was still, you know, in high school. And after graduation he still was there to stay. But to hear him on the air he sounded like he was an Afro American because he didn't sound with the tongue of a Caucasian, but he was a Caucasian. And he pulled a lot of listeners because everybody was listening to him from Myers Park and all the high schools, and we had a lot of white listeners, I mean a lot of them, more than we realized. And the way we really found out that we were just more than just beaming into the urban areas, the black area, we would have events, concerts, and they would be almost fifty-fifty in race. And it was just amazing, because we played a mixture of music. You know, we played the Elvis Presley records, we played a lot of the groups and the local groups in Charlotte, we had several local groups, and we would play their records as well. We supported our local talent, we really did that, both black and white, so our listener base was very large.

CW: When you first came to the station, how was it characterized then?

HL: Predominantly black, it was just absolutely black, predominately black. And then when the white merchants decided, "Well hey, we're missing some dollars if we don't advertise on that station over there, we need to bring in some of those dollars that the blacks are spending here for toys for Christmas," you know for everything. So they started advertising on our station because they couldn't just go to predominately white stations. They needed some of that revenue, so they started kicking commercials right and left to us. I think yesterday I showed you a master list of some of the accounts I had, jewelry stores, K-Mart, you know, I had a, had a mixture of all, and grocery stores, just everything. But when I first went to the station, we had a lot of national spots too. We had Luck's Beans, with the accounts being headquartered in Tennessee and places like that. We had medicines like BC, Stand Back, headache powders, you know, those were national accounts, we had those because black people have headaches and toothaches, you know, so they had to start dropping some dollars into our market at our station. And all of the automobile dealers, because you know black people love cars, and they love, you know, pretty cars and they like fly cars, so the car dealers were all over our station. We had grocery stores, it was, wherein today you would sound real strange sitting up talking about a grocery store and you get three lemons for a dollar, you know. That people don't have time to listen to weekly specials, but they'll do it on television because it's quick, you know, they show it, and you know, and it's gone. But we would sit up and talk, and talk, and talk about a product at a grocery store. If you were running chicken this week for your weekly special, we would just talk and talk about that chicken, you just couldn't wait to go buy it and go home and fry it and cook it and eat it, you know. So it was just amazing how the dollars started to coming in when they started looking at the bottom line, the revenue line. So when that money started coming in from sponsors, we upgraded the station. I say we, because we were a team. The management, the owner was a very very visionary person, Francis M. Fitzgerald. And he would listen to the input of all of the announcers and the sales staff and we would have staff meetings very often, every week. The sales staff would meet every week, every morning really before they'd go out for that day, and

then they would meet and all of the staff would come together. And we would throw out ideas on how we can expand and nobody would laugh at anybody's suggestion, no matter how comical it might have been. We would take that for face value and work with it. And we started having fifteen minute slots on the air, a sponsor would take fifteen minutes of block time and let the announcer talk about their business for fifteen minutes. You'd come on with a theme song, then after you played excerpts from a record, music that I had put in the music box, you would open up with talking about "National Hat Shop" or you would talk about whatever that fifteen minute block time would be, you know. You would give them fifteen minutes, talk about no other sponsor in that time but just that product, you know, that company.

CW: For fifteen minutes straight?

HL: For fifteen minutes, yes.

CW: That's a long time in air time isn't it?

HL: Well, on an AM station back in the day, it went fairly fast because by the time you did your theme song, your opening, and you would plug the address, you would plug the telephone number, you would plug that they had a layaway plan, or you would plug--because that was a big thing, they didn't have so many charge cards at that time, you know. And you would really push their layaway plan. If you go in and pay a dollar down it would hold your layaway and you'd pay on it till you get it out. And like today I think a layaway is in thirty days you got to have it out or they'll put it back in stock. But then I remember one time I kept a coat on layaway almost a year. (laughs) I forgot I had it, and they never did take it off. (laughs) And several other folk did the same thing, and jewelry, same thing. Brownlee Jewelers, Neiman Jewelers and all those jewelry stores, you go in and start paying in the early summer time on a ring that may cost two hundred dollars, and you would pay on it up until Christmas and you would be able to get it out. And a two hundred dollar ring was a pretty thing then. Wherein now it's zirconium, you know (laughs) for two hundred dollars in a lot of cases. But it was very good to do a fifteen minute block show because you could just talk about everything that you sold in your store in that fifteen minute time, and it went by fairly fast.

CW: How, how was that divided out then? You said that you'd have this meeting in the morning, and this is in the early, pretty early days of the station, right?

HL: Um-hum.

CW: So there'd be, how many announcers would there be altogether at that meeting?

HL: Now, it would be everyone that's on the payroll would be there except the person that was on the air. You know you'd have to have somebody on the air, you know, they couldn't be on the air and in the meeting at the same time.

CW: Right, so this would be--

HL: But it would be all of the other staff, you know, even the night crew, the evening crew, you know. They all would come in for the staff meeting, you have to come to your, that's a requirement, even now at stations you have to--

CW: And it wouldn't always be held at the same time--

HL: Right.

CW: --so the person who was on the air would be able to?

HL: Come to the meeting.

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CW: And then, you'd, how would you divide up all the sponsors, or did the individual announcers, they, they got the sponsors themselves, is that how it worked?

HL: Some of them did, but for the most part, the sales department, the executive department would handle sales, because that's, that's a lot of work. You know, you've got to beat the payment to sell it, you know, and then you've got to service the account after you sell it, you got to collect, you know, we did it all, you know. And then we did the billing.

CW: Would they, would the sponsors require or request a particular announcer?

HL: A lot of them did, yes, a lot of them did. And then some of them, just as long as it was on the air, they didn't care who did the spot, who made the commercial. But there were some that preferred Genial Gene to do it, or Chatty Hattie to do it, or whomever, you know. They would request that person that they wanted to. And then a lot of times a sales staff would say, "I want you to do this spot for me Chatty, you know, you being the female here at the station. You could handle doing this particular spot for me better than perhaps a male person." You know, it could've gone that way too. I did a recipe show on my program back in the early days, giving out recipes. I had a sponsor, and it was Martha White flour that you would bake cakes with and make good biscuits and that kind of thing. So they didn't want a male person doing that over me, and me being a female they kind of figured that would fit me better to do that, to run that show. And it was a fifteen minute show too. And I would have the listeners to write in and send me their favorite cake recipe, or their favorite pie crust recipe using Martha White flour. And when they would do that, I would pick a winner. I'd have, not just me pick it, but I'd have other people there at the station to help me go through the recipes. And then I'd have a home economist person to look at them too, and we would pick out maybe the best two or three, and we would narrow it down to two, and then narrow it down to one, and choose a winner that way. We have a dentist here in Charlotte that's still practicing, his name was Dr. Spurgeon Webber. And his wife sent in a recipe for a cake, a pound cake using Martha White flour and she was the winner, and I put this picture of her in my book. And I think her prize could've been maybe a hundred dollar bill or a gift certificate or something like that for entering. And the homemakers all listened to my show because of that segment, you know, they like listening to that. When today, you know, you got to play music, you can't talk that long, you know to give out a recipe, my lord, they'd punch you

out, you know, everybody push button, you know. So that wouldn't necessarily fly today as much as it did back then.

CW: Would some of the sponsors have slots throughout the day? So that there would be several announcers giving, advertising their wares?

HL: Yeah, sure did. I remember Lebo's shoe store. All of the announcers talked about Lebo's shoe store throughout various times of the day. Another thing, there's a, what it's called in radio if they still call it that now, but it was a time buy. They had a segment called a time buy, and in prime time, like in morning drive time, commercials cost more, and in evening drive time they cost more. A more moderate price spot would run midday. And most stores wanted to be in prime time, but if you were not at a good budget to pay for advertising, then you would, you know, take the softer times during the day, or at night, you know, you didn't pay as much for your time. Then we had what was known as a weekend buy, a weekend buy. Where Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, your spots were a different price. We also had a seasonal buy, right now you're into your seasonal because it's Christmas, the holiday season, so a buy now is different. Then we had fifteen minute shows for the funeral homes. We had Grier's funeral service, we had Long's mortuary, we had--and you'd play only gospel music during those slots. And that would run on Sundays, and the funeral services would run, you'd talk about that funeral home for fifteen minutes during that period. You'd play a gospel music, you would read off obituaries, persons who maybe was funeralized last week, you would mention that, then you would mention, you know, the new bodies that may be incomplete, you know and this kind of thing. By the time you play two or three records and talk, you know, all of this about it, your fifteen minutes is up. But during that time, you're plugging away the name of that funeral home, and that address, and that telephone number. You know, it's not like once over now they say it one time and if you've missed it, then hey, tough luck, but we kept drilling it, you know, we drilled. We assumed that everybody maybe had to go find a pencil and come back, and we'd still be talking. (both laugh) So you know, it wasn't a fast pace at all, but yet it was interesting, it was informational, and a lot of people would say, "Well, I didn't know so and so passed, I didn't hear that on the radio." Wherein now you would look at the Observer page for the obituaries. But they relied on us to tell them the information.

CW: What other kind of programming was there in the, in the early days of the--so you had a lot of music, was it always dominated by music, the station?

HL: Music and talk, music and talk. See, talk was a big thing, talk was a big thing. Wherein now they don't want to hear all that talking, they just want music, music, music. And they, while you're talking now, they punch out and go to another station, you know. But see, they never changed the dial, they kept it at 1600 on the radio dial. They didn't ever change it, they'd go downtown to buy a radio and put it on 1600 in the store, and it never moved off of that dial.

CW: So, so how might it be through the day, the very first radio program of the day for WGIV?

HL: You would start out with spiritual music at five in the mornings. He would open up with gospel music. Every day was started out on a religious note, and I think that program would last for about an hour, you know, from five to six, maybe six thirty. And then after six thirty, then

they started, you know rhythm and blues. After that, you know, getting people out of there, they got to go to school, they got to go to work, you know. But everybody would start their day on WGIV. They didn't cut it off at night when we signed off, they just left it on so when it would come on the next morning, it would wake them up as the alarm clock. It's amazing, it's cute, and it was so, so sacred, so close, so family, you know. And you just didn't ever, ever, ever, cut your radio off, you just kept it right there and you never changed the dial to go see what somebody else was playing or saying, you didn't. You just didn't move it. Now if you wanted sports, you know, a lot of the people like sports, you would change then to hear, you know, what's going at Memorial Stadium, you know, that kind of thing.

CW: So there was no sports on WGIV?

HL: Not ever really. It was just all commercials, talk, and music. But to run a game on the radio, that, we didn't have the capabilities to even broadcast a play by play game. We didn't do that, we didn't have that luxury at that time, in the early days.

CW: You have the news? Did you have news?

HL: Yes and our news was not new news. Most times we were running late on it, you know, because we didn't have the means to bring news in on our airways. We didn't have that. We had really arrived when we were able to buy an AP machine. That makes it, it runs continuously, the AP, and you'd cut it off at night when you signed off the air to save paper. (both laugh) And the news would, you know, come down from Washington D.C., and you had a lot of news on there that was not local news. And it would use up all of our paper and we would try to cut it, you know, off and try to get it back on just in time just for local stuff that happened in the South, or happened in North Carolina. News wasn't just like instant, like right now if somebody went downtown as we're speaking now and tried to bomb a federal building or a terrorist would do anything, you would here before it's solved, before they are behind bars, you would know that something had occurred. Wherein we couldn't do that, we didn't have that luxury, unless somebody saw it happen and would call the station and tell you about something. And then we wouldn't put it on right then anyway, because we wanted to check the story out. Because some kook could just call up and say, "You know somebody just beheaded somebody on the square," well we wouldn't put that on until it was given to us from law enforcement. So we weren't just on it like they are today, we didn't have that luxury of having--

CW: But you did have sort of editorials where you would talk about--

HL: We did editorials, we did. Now everyday, we ran an editorial and it would run all day for that day, and we would save them and I would file those editorials, and they would resurface again, you know, at some point. Maybe the announcer wouldn't have time to do a new editorial, and we would re-run them again maybe within a thirty day period, the same editorial. Larry Keith, who went to WRPL with us, he was the manager over there and he was the one that would do the editorials on the air. And they were not the opinion of the announcers at the station or the staff, it would just be an editorial, you know, something for you to think about. A conversation piece to me. That's what an editorial is, you know, something to talk about.

CW: Was there usually a tone or theme to these that typified the station? Would the topics be similar or--

HL: Well they were having to do with issues, you know, whether it's a school board issues, county commission, city council issues. Mostly political issues, a lot of--he stayed away from controversial things, you know, that could get you, somebody out there riled up. You didn't talk about religious faiths and denominations, you know, none of that kind of thing that would be a touchy thing for somebody. He would talk about in general, something that would fit the norm. You know, mostly educational stuff that he had researched and got this information from anyway in the first place, you know to talk about it. Yeah, and they were just good helpful hints. You know, he'd talk about the importance of getting maybe a flu shot, or something, you know, something that would appeal to the majority of the people. They were not editorials that would, like some of the newscasters do now, they step on people's toes and that kind of thing, we didn't do that. We always got compliments about the editorials, because it was a motivation, to the editorials. It would make you feel good, you know, about whatever.

CW: What would you say was the mission of the station, the--

HL: To serve, to serve the people was the general mission of the station. To serve, in every way that we could. You know, information-wise, serving the people, educational-wise, serving the people, giving people consumer protection, giving you advice about all kinds of situations that occur in our world, you know, we are global now. And we were just, you know, we were there to serve, that's in essence the bottom line, you know, it goes just that way. We were in business to serve. And not to serve with a hand out, wanting to be paid for everything, we, that's where I still get that from now. I just want to say no sometimes because I'm tired, but somebody asked me to do something, "Aw, what date is that, and what time, well I have this down on my calendar but maybe I can, yeah I'll be there, yeah I'll do it." You know, they would call on us to do some of the most ridiculous things, they just wanted us there. We were their stars, like they worship these rock stars today, with the Beatles and all these folk. We were to them the Michael Jackson, we were the big people, we were the stars, we were the headliners. And we stayed on top of it because we never said no; we were in that community and we served it. We served it, and we did it for all ages and all colors. That was just the bottom line and we just, was thrilling to do it, just, oh my goodness. I know Genial Gene used to be so tired. He'd go somewhere, leave this event, go to another event, leave that event, and he'd go to sleep sitting in a chair at somebody's house or somebody's event, you'd have to shake him and say "wake up bro." (laughs) You know, cause you're so tired you don't know how to say no. We belonged to our public. And when my child was a little girl, I didn't know what it was to be home on a Christmas morning to open toys under the tree with her. I never had that, my mother did it. I couldn't do it, cause I had to be on the radio. If something drastic happened in your family, somebody would call you at the radio station and say, "Your aunt just died," or whomever, or your daddy, or your momma, don't care who it is, you didn't come off the air till your show was up. And then you would leave to go see about what happened. You had a job to do, you were committed, you wouldn't think of leaving your radio show to go see about some family disaster. You'd stay right there till the last minute of your show. You might put a long record on at the end and let it start playing, and you, you know, say, "I'll see you tomorrow," or something like that, and you know, you would go on and off the air with a theme song. And if you were kind of in a big hurry to really go see about

something, like one time I had to go to the Catholic school to pick up my daughter. She was sick and they wanted me to come get her right away, and I still had another forty-five minutes on my show. I told them I would be there within an hour. They let her stay there in the nurse's office, so I finished my show out, I put my theme on and let it play all the way out so it would come out right on the precision timing, you know for the next show to start. And then I left, you know, the station, I was cleaning up my stuff, you know, while that, winding it down and then rushed as fast as I could to get there. But you finished your air shift. Like today on jobs when people get sick, or I don't care what happens, they go to their boss and say, "I got to leave, you know, I got an appointment, I got to go," well I don't care what your appointment is, you stayed till your show was over. I mean that's just the bottom, you wanted to stay, you were committed to stay. You were happy to stay, and then when you'd get off. But one time I had a fan to call me and say, "you need to come over here, your father is sitting out on the porch, and he's got money in his pocket and somebody is going to rob him if you don't come over here and get his money, he's half sleep sitting out on the porch. And we don't want to go up there and touch him because we don't want to be accused of robbing him. Say you need to get on over here because your daddy has been drinking and he's sleep, in and out of sleep, and got paid off apparently, got money." And I said, "Well okay, thanks for the information." I finished my show and then I went over to Daddy's apartment and sure enough, he was drunk as a skunk sitting on the porch, talking noise, and had a pocket full of money. But nobody hit him in the head and robbed him that time, but one other time it did happen, but that time it didn't. But I didn't, you know, rush to judgment and have a wreck trying to run to see about anything or anybody. My listeners were my top priority. That's just the way it was and still would be, and DJs, this is true, this is a true statement. We are dedicated to our families, to our mates, but your mate has to take the back burner in so many instances because you are going do what you got to do for your fans first. And jealous wives and jealous husbands have a problem with that. They want to be first, and they are first, but they don't want to feel that you going to go out here and emcee an affair before you go do this with me. Do mine first and then, you know, do theirs another time. But it's not like that. If you're really an entertainer, you are going to go and take care of your public, your John P. Public, it's the way we feel about marriages. And that's why so many show business people have married three, four, five, six, Elizabeth Taylor, lord have mercy, I don't know how many husbands. But we don't care about how many times we go up to that altar and say, "I do." Because our, we're married to our business, that's first, I'm sorry. And if you don't have a mate that understands that, then it's bye-bye, and it's like a merry-go-round, it's next. That's just the way that is.

CW: And you experienced that with colleagues?

HL: Um-hum, yes.

CW: It was hard for them to have just one relationship.

HL: Yes, very much so. It's hard anyway because you have so much temptation. It's a lot of temptation out there when you in show business. You run across a lot of lonely hearts out there and they need somebody to hug them and say, "you're beautiful," and they fall in love with you and you were just being nice by saying, "oh, you look nice," you know. They'll compliment, because we'll pass that out so they'll have a good image of us. But you don't want them to fall in

love with you, but some of them will stalk you everywhere you go, they are sitting in the audience right up front. You can go all out of town emceeding shows and that same face you see just followed you to different concerts where you're appearing. And show business is an interesting business, and unless you in that rim of people that's in show business, you don't really fit in other areas. Can you kind of understand what I mean? You, you have a separate kind of lifestyle, separate kind of thinking, your thoughts, you know. You're not as laid back as a lot of folk think. Because they hear your talking and gabbing on the air ways, they think when they meet you in person that you talkative like that, you know. And I've gone a lot of places and people are punching me up saying, "Get to talking, Chatty Hattie." Well, we are being paid to talk. When we're talking, we're using our voice for our revenue. You're not just somewhere just talking just to be talking. And they don't understand that, a lot of people, they really don't, they think you're just a talking machine, per se, and it's not like that. I'm the quietest thing in all the club meetings that I attend, and all of the functions that I attend. I'm quieter than anybody in the room, and people will say, "I had no idea, you supposed to be talking." No, I'm just looking at you all, and listening to you guys talk. I get paid when I talk, so I'm quiet when I'm around folk. And people don't quite understand that, they think you supposed to be just running your mouth. You wouldn't last long, people would be tired of you if you were that kind of talking machine. I want to be appreciated when I say something, I want to be--I'm comfortable being the leader, being the person that's up making the presentation, but when somebody else is doing it, I take a seat and listen and learn. You're never so important and big headed and egoed that you can't learn from somebody. So you listen, and critique them, and say hm. You can get food for thought if you listen to others talk. You don't want to always be the one that's dominating. I don't have a cabbage head, where I got to pat myself on the back. If my work that I have done in my life, if that hasn't spoken for me, then I don't need to say nothing, because I live every day the way that at night when I go to bed I can sleep good. I haven't hurt nobody, I haven't stabbed nobody in the back, I haven't gone out and here and been two faced, told you that I'm your friend and then behind your back I'm saying "oh I hate that SOB." You know, I love being natural, no put on, don't brag, don't flounce. You last longer if you are for real.

CW: I guess in the show business you must have come across a lot of people who are not very real?

HL: Oh yes, oh yes, very fake, very fake. And you can really run, and almost all occupations you run into a lot of that. It's jealousy, that's what it is, and the sooner you accept the fact the reason people are that way is jealousy, then you can survive, you can go on and make it.

CW: Right. I wanted to go back to your first experience. What took you from being the fourteen year old girl who was sorting out the office to being the person in the chair?

HL: Actually, being accessible caused it all. I was there when I was needed. And when you fulfill a need at any employment, when a break comes, you are considered for it. And I was at the right place at the right time. The other announcer that had that time slot goofed that up, and I was there and was able to go sit in the chair and segue his music, because he could not go back on the air, he was intoxicated. And I continued from then on having that show.

CW: What was it like that day, how did you feel about it?

HL: I didn't really think that much of it because I had no idea this would grow into a show of my own. You know, it hadn't gotten to that point to think like that, I just thought I was filling in behind the scenes until he got there. Because he was running late, and most days he was late, because you'd hear him when he pulled up to the station squeaking his brakes, trying to stop the old car before hitting the building. So I just thought I was just playing records, you know, when one record finished, I would start the other one. We had turntables, you know, today they got machines, you know cart machines, they got computer music now, you know, everything is computerized now. So I was just segueing the records. When one finished on the left side of me, I would start the turntable on the right. And that went on so they came in there and told me, said, "Now in fifteen minutes, you going to have to open the microphone and give the time." Because we would give the time of day so people would know what time it is, what the temperature is, the station call letters, you got to do that at the bottom and top of the hour. Like if it's four o'clock, that's the top of the hour, four thirty is the bottom of the hour. So you have to open the mic at those times, that's a federal requirement to give your station ID. They say, "now when those times come, you've got to open that mic and say that." I knew then, "oh Lord, I'm sitting in the hot seat here today. I've got to get up, I can't say nothing on the air. Uh-huh, not me, I'm not ready for that step." They said, "Well close your eyes and grit your teeth and open that mic and don't imagine that it's you saying it, but you got to say this is WGIV two pm eastern standard time, and then you can cut the mic off and go right on back to segueing your music." And then when you get ready to do your commercials, they were on my cart machine, you could just push the button. But some of those commercials were in the book and you had to read those. (laughs) Oh Lord have mercy. So, I struggled. The truth is I totally struggled, but after I did it one or two times it took me so long to open that microphone up to say anything it was a little switch and you had to push it, and for the mic, you know, the red light would come on to let you know you're on the air. Oh Lord, I switched it back off, they say, "one more time, you got to keep doing it until you do it. Just don't think about it, just do it just like you doing, like picking up a phone," I said, "Oh, I can do that." So I did it and I did it real fast. I said, "It's on the tape down at the museum right now," what I said. I said, and they said, "Don't call your name because it's not your show yet." And I said, "Oh no I know that," (laughs) farthest thing from my mind, because I didn't have a radio name per se. So they said, "You just say the time now, and you got to say the caller ID and then get through this next hour and then maybe, when he arrives they will have him in the office and let him know he can't go back on anymore. And then we'll have somebody else in here tomorrow." I said, "Thank God, okay. Well since I can do this today and nobody seeing me doing this, it's not televised, I can do an hour, I know I can do an hour." So when it got to be the bottom of the hour on the two thirty time, I opened that microphone because it didn't bite, you know, and nobody was watching me, I didn't think nobody was watching me, but they were looking at me through the other side of the room. They had a glass there and they had the light out, and everybody in the station was in there watching me sweat. But I didn't do as bad as I thought I did. I thought I was terrible, but they played it back and I didn't sound that bad. I said, "Hmn, that's me? I sounded like that?" I said, "Oh, okay." (laughs) And it worked out where when the bottom of the hour came, I did it, and I did it fast and didn't think about it. That I was sitting there doing this, I was just, I just did it. And I did it so well, when it was time to do the next fifteen minutes to give the time and the temperature, I did it no problem, and then it was getting up to my last fifteen minutes for me to get up out that chair and let the next announcer come on. I said, "What am I to say at the end?" They said, "Just, just don't

say anything, just run it all the way up till time for the station ID, and the next announcer will say it.” I said, “Oh good, I don’t have to say nothing else?” They said, “No.” And, the next day when I went down there after school, they said, “Little Hattie, little Chatty.” That’s what they called me and said, “We want you to sit in again tomorrow, today and tomorrow while we look for somebody for that show.” I said, “Okay, do what I did yesterday?” They said, “Exactly what you did yesterday.” I did it, and I did it better. Third day was that Friday and I would be through. Did it, they talked to me after that show on Friday and said, “You know, we can develop you into keeping that show. It’s no point in us going out here and training somebody else and you already know to enter, you know, in the inside and you’re already a part of us anyway. How would you like to have that show everyday?” I said, “Well, I have to ask my momma.” They said, “Oh well, we know you’d have to talk to your momma.” So I went home and told Momma and she said, “Well, just long as you don’t lose sight, making a little money down there at that station, don’t lose sight on the fact that you got to go to school, you got to stay in school, graduate and go on for higher learning.” I said, “Yes ma’am.” She said, “But you can do it.” I went back, I said, “Momma, Momma said it’s going to be all right!” I was just grinning and they said, “oh well, that’s good.” Because Momma was strict, you know, back in the day parents didn’t, I mean you had to be on the level with your parents. You told the truth or you’d get your head knocked off, and Momma never had to whip me, I never had a whipping. She would sit me down and talk to me and tears would flow down my cheek as if I had been whipped. Because I didn’t want to hurt her, I loved her. She didn’t deserve a daughter that didn’t respect. And so therefore I did everything to please her. And she would always keep me focused by saying to me, “How would you sit or dress if the Lord walked in this room right now?” Meaning that you don’t sit with a dress on like you sit with pants on, wide-legged. You don’t talk or act boisterous if God was to walk in this room, and she’d tell me, “You never know when he’s coming, but he’s coming back. And you want to be respectable, you want to be prepared for this, for yourself, for me, for God, for all people that will ever meet you.” And she reared me with that thought and that’s why I was always a person that could never smoke a cigarette, because it used to make me sick to smell it, be around smoke. I wanted to always feel that I was clean, that I had sweet breath, because you’re talking on the microphone with people and behind people and you don’t want a foul smelling voice, and your vocal cords husky and dry from cigarette smoking. So I never desired things like that. Not that I thought I was above anybody that did have an addiction, but I just never did it. I figured I needed to keep my vocal cords clean and clear for earning my living. This was my, my basketball, it was my goal, my throw.

CW: How, how did you handle the next few weeks?

HL: I did better each day, and I got to a point where when I got a good paycheck after, you know, you got paid every two weeks. And I got a paycheck, and Lord glory be, I haven’t stopped yet. You talking about going to push my own self like I did in school to learn. I got that thing down pat, because that paycheck made me think, “Hey, I’m getting paid.” I got to thinking I’m sitting down talking on a microphone. Having fun, getting paid for this, this is going to be my life’s proposed work. I’m going to always want to do this, but I always knew I had to do more because my mother was demanding you don’t stop at one career, you have to have something in your leaner years to fall back on. When you get thirty, forty, fifty years old, you’re not no swinging bubble gum DJ at that age, she would tell me. You’re not finger popping, and, and bubble gum smacking, and, and hip and all that when you reach middle age. She said, “You got

to have something to fall back on. So get a basic foundation, get you an education, get you some degrees.” So that’s why I got all these various, none of them are related (laughs), my degrees, because she always said, “Be prepared in more than one area, doing more than one thing.” So that’s why when people ask me all the time, “What year did you do--,” I don’t know because I was doing two other things at that same time and I don’t know what year I started it. And all I know is here’s the results of it. I did it, and here’s how I matriculated. I did it. (laughs) But what year, I have to go find the paperwork on it, I don’t know.

CW: Were you a senior when this opportunity came up for you at the station?

HL: I was younger than a senior.

CW: A junior?

HL: I was more like a rising sophomore.

CW: Really?

HL: And when I was doing, you know, my entry level stuff, you know, but I was a rising junior when I started, you know, the air shift. Because I started out, with, it’s in my book, I had a small schedule, it was like thirty minutes, I believe it was. And then I worked up from that into really getting into having much longer hours. You used to come on the air two and three times during a day, you didn’t come on like they do now. You’re a morning DJ, when you go off in the morning, you’re done. But we may come back again in the afternoon, everybody did morning and afternoon.

CW: When you were still a child at school though, when you were still at Second Ward High School, did you do twice a day then, or just once a day? Thirty minutes?

HL: No, I would just go; actually I just did that thirty minute show.

CW: What did you do?

HL: It was primarily more like talk. It was more of like, that when I did the recipe shows, you know, where you’d have a guest in. I would interview people from the community. That kind of thing.

CW: Did you start out just with the music for a while, while you gathered your thoughts about how you were going, did they--?

HL: You always came on with a theme song. That identified who’s on the air.

CW: When did you choose your theme song? What was it?

HL: I had one called *Honky Tonk*, it was an instrumental by Bill Doggett, I had another theme song call *Soul Twist*, it was an R&B song, all music of course. And I ended all of my shows with

a vocal by Arthur Conley, it was called *There's a Place for Us, Somewhere There's a Place for Us*. I ended my shows with that. When people would hear that, they knew that was the end of that show for Chatty Hattie that day.

CW: Did you start that then from when you were just a rising junior?

HL: When I first started, and I did this the entire years that I was on, I used that ending song. But I alternated between the two opening theme songs, *Soul Twist* and then the Bill Doggett *Honky Tonk* song.

CW: Were you allowed to shape that time the way you wanted to shape it? Or did they say, "We really want this kind of thing this time?"

HL: No, they left that individually, you could do your own thing. And you did what you felt comfortable with, you didn't do what somebody else. Like today, they will tell disc jockeys today, do it this way, we want it done this way, we want two or three people talking and laughing all at the same time and cutting up, you know, and carrying on comical stuff. We didn't do comical stuff on the air, everything was a serious approach. We didn't do stuff to make you laugh like they do now. One morning I was in my car driving to Davidson College to take my granddaughter up there for summer youth program at the Ada Jenkins Center. This summer, and a DJ was on the air, a station that my granddaughter punched up, you know, they're going to punch up stations, you know. She punched in, and this DJ on the air was laughing, and it was a male laughing and a female was laughing, another female was laughing, and another male, it was four different laughs. And they laughed from the time I left my driveway. And I don't know what they were laughing about but they had said something, you know, that had them laughing. Somebody had called in or whatever they were doing on the show, and a popular show, very popular radio station. And they laughed, and I had to wait at the traffic light a good while and then get up on the main highway to go 85 up to Davidson, no 77 North up to Davidson is the way. We were way about a mile before they stopped laughing. And my granddaughter, I said, "Let's change the station and get something else." I said, "Sounds like a broken record is hung up here, just laughing." She says, "That's the novelty of it." She said, "You hear two different males and two different females laughing." She said, "That's, that's good!" She thought that was hip. I said, "But we don't know what they're laughing about." She say, "You just listen, and you'll get tickled." And after a while she broke out and started laughing with them. I said, "Well Lord, I am certainly not ready for today's times in radio." I'm not. And then when they finally said words, they just said, "Oh boy!" And then they went into a commercial. But I had had it taking that child to the summer youth program the whole summer and listening to her tune in and out of different stations, you know, because I kind of have lost the touch of knowing that you carry on like that. And then at night there is a TV show that's on, on one of the channels with a white male and a black female and they are just jabbing at each other something you know, just having a great time, they're in their own world. You know, but there are listeners out here looking on wondering, "Why? What?" The five Ws; what, when, why, where, what? (laughs) But that's the way they do it. But if I was a station manager, I wouldn't necessarily want it done like that. I would certainly want that changed. (phone rings) I would. (phone rings)

CW: How did your role change through the years at WGIV, your program?

HL: It changed in as much as I grew into maturity, and I interjected more of variety into my programs. And when I say promoting more variety, I did more interviewing, because I felt safe that I could handle that then because I was old enough to have more knowledge. And when guests would come in town, I would expand by letting them come over to the station and talk on my show and say hello to my listeners over the air waves. I could handle that, you know, with the big major stars in town. I grew into, into my own, you know, into letting myself out on a limb. Because when you're asking people questions, you don't know what their answer might be. And then I had grown to the point that, there's some people you will interview and you give them the mic to say something, they'll give you a one word answer. And you want them to expand, talk a little more. And then you'd have to almost do the interview, you know, yourself. Because you'd have to say, "Oh well is that right," and "I'm sure you enjoyed that," well then they wouldn't say nothing but just, "Well, yeah." I'll say, "Well, where's your next stop when you leave Charlotte, the coliseum here in Charlotte? Where do you go from here?" And they'll say, "Columbia." And that's it. And you'd say, "Well, are you expecting a big crowd in Columbia when you get there? Was it a lot of people there before when you traveled through?" Or, "Did you have a new record out during that time?" "Yeah." (laughs) You know, it's hard to interview people like that if you're new at it. So I changed with maturity, realizing that I've got to be the one to carry this, make it interesting, expound, so I grew into maturity. I think that's what I could say for myself during that time. I learned how to carry on the conversation if I had someone that was a one-word interview person. And that's the worst kind, when people won't open up and say, you know, too much. For example, if they've traveled on a bus coming to Charlotte, coming from another city, Knoxville Tennessee or somewhere, they're tired and they're sleepy and they don't really want to be there. But their managers say, "You got to go out and talk on Chatty Hattie's show, it'll help our sales, our ticket sales. So you got to get out there." And they may not have wanted to and they don't care about talking because they're sleepy and they want to be left alone. So I can understand some of that, but you're supposed to, if you're the entertainer, you're the entertainer, you know, you do the job, and then you go on back home and go to bed and go to sleep. But sometimes they would be one word answers and you used to say, "Oh my Lord." And back then wrestling matches, that was a big thing in Charlotte, the wrestling. And I would have wrestlers to come out to the show and they don't care how they've been bounced around and thrown out the ring, they going to talk when they come, you know, because they love a microphone, you know, they love, "I'm the king!," you know. And you have to take the mic from them because they are so jubilant, you know, and you love them for it! But you would have to be in control of the conversation, or they'll take your whole show from you, you know. A lot of the sports people, a lot of the athletes like that, and people, the wrestlers. And then some of the R&B singers, you know, can be a little obnoxious too, so it just depends on that individual. When you're interviewing somebody and you're getting the feedback that it's, you know, taking charge, taking your show from you, you know, you got to know how to quell that, you know. Maturity of being in the business, the experience of being in the business will help you to grow.

CW: How long were the interviews usually?

HL: It was, no time limit on it necessarily, but you would know how long you've got to talk to somebody, because you know what time your next commercial is coming up that's got to come up on time. You know your station ID has got to come up on time, you know what your

parameters that you're working with, so you know how to tell them sometimes, "Well let's hold on, we'll be right back." Just like on TV they say, you know, we got to do this and we'll be right back, just hold that right there, you know, and you control it. But sometimes it's hard, you just have to cut them off. I notice on *Meet the Press* sometimes, those politicians get on there and start talking about the economy, and one have this view, another one this view, and another one this view, and you have to tell them, "Well guys, yes, hold on guys, we'll be right back, yes." And you just have to cut em off and go on to your commercial because you've got to make the money for the station. And then you come back and you come back with a smile, you don't ever act like you're angered or anything, although you might want to say, "I can't wait to sweep you all out," you know. (laughs) But you still have to maintain a level of confidence and professionalism by all means.

CW: What were your working hours at this time in your career? How many shows did you have?

HL: Per day? No more than two.

CW: What times of day were they?

HL: My schedule is in the book. I don't remember the first schedule because they were in thirty minute segments I believe, but the schedule is in my book. Let's see--

CW: Do you remember going in early in the morning?

HL: Oh yes, I was there, I helped Genial Gene with his early morning show at six in the morning. There's a clock on the wall and then I think in the picture here it's--

CW: Did you continue to do that after you had your own show?

HL: Here's my early work schedule here, I did those block times

CW: Page thirty-seven.

HL: Those are the times.

CW: So nine-thirty to ten-thirty, then eleven to eleven-thirty and one to two. And Monday through Saturday, that's a lot.

HL: Yeah, that was a lot, and that was in very early radio there.

CW: Were those all very different programs?

HL: I did the same thing on practically all of them. Same type of program.

CW: So it would it be a mixture of talking, some music--

HL: Commercials.

CW: --interviews, and the commercials, right? Were the interviews, you started the interviews pretty early on because you got community people out first. Besides the athletes and the musicians, who else might you have on the radio to interview?

HL: I would bring in civic organizations, the leaders in the neighborhoods. I would bring in people from the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers, Girls Scouts, Hornet's Nest. It was all over, you know, it was no particular sector of people, your focus was broad, you brought in some of everybody, you wanted to give everybody equal timing, equal share to your air waves.

CW: Did you always decide who you were going to have on, that was all within your control?

HL: It was in my control as well as the public would call you sometimes, or write to you and say, "I would like to be on your program." The 4-H Club, or one of the agricultural extension agent people, people from Social Services. You would have volunteers up to, you wouldn't know sometimes who you really wanted to choose from because the volunteers were always willing to come out because you had PR people with all these organizations, United Way, you know. And I would give them all equal time, let them come over and tell about the different. Red Cross, you know, if they needed blood, if their blood bank was getting low on blood donations, I would have them to come over and tell people where they were going to be so they could come and give blood. We just reached out to everybody.

CW: You didn't have to really go and look for people then, it sounds like they were--

HL: No, I never had to.

CW: --and you always had a long list.

HL: Yeah, the list was long. And you would go to that list and then you would see people in the grocery store. You could be pushing your buggy, minding your business, getting up your family's groceries. Somebody would come up to you and say, "You know what, I would love to come on your program and talk about my vegetable garden that I'm growing in my backyard. What some of my green thumb tactics are on raising, you know flowers, or veggies, or what have you." Then I'd have people from animal control to come out and talk about the animals that's, to be adopted. You know, it was always a service, it was a service oriented--it wasn't for somebody to get on there and then enhance their business, you know, you didn't do that. But anything that would be information for your public, you would cater to that type of program.

CW: What were some memorable interviews that you had?

HL: I had a lost and found program, and in that lost and found program if you were missing an animal, a dog for example, and a lady would call, or a man, or a child saying, "I can't find my puppy." I would say, "describe your puppy." They'd said, "It was a brown and white beagle," or "it was a Dalmatian, it was black and white," you know, whatever. And they say, "about how old is, was your puppy or your dog?" And they would say how old the dog or cat, and I'd said, "Well, what was it wearing, did it have a collar, you know, describe it, you know, so if

somebody sees it they would know,” and they would tell you, you know, different little things, “It had a limp in its left leg, but not real bad limp, it was just a minor limp because it got hurt, but it’s getting well.” And they would describe it, and they’d sound so pitiful, a little boy wanting his dog back, and a little girl was wanting her kitty cat back. And so we would describe and we would let them stay on the phone and maybe somebody would call and say, “Yeah, I saw that little gray cat running down the street, and it had a little white spot on its nose. Yeah, we see him, we’re looking out at him now, we’ll go find your little kitty cat for you, stop crying.” And we would help to find animals like that. Then here comes this woman going to call in one day, she had been drinking. And she said, “Ms. Chatty Hattie, my husband got paid Friday and he hadn’t been back home, and here it is Monday morning and I don’t know where he is, or what, where John at? Could you put that on your program for me?” And I had to play a record.

CW: (laughs)

HL: And talked to her on the phone and told her she would have to call the police department for lost husbands. We don’t do those on the air. If he is a run around and a person that, you know, get paid off and don’t show back up, well you know, he could be where he want to be, unless you know, foul play was in the picture, but you still would need to go through the police department. And she got me told, I had to cut the air off, the mic off because she said, “I just heard you advertise finding a cat for somebody, and I know my husband’s more important.” So that will always stick out in my mind more than anything that I can remember of a disaster that happened when I was on the air. And I was getting her off so fast and putting on a record, because she was about ready to say some vulgar words, you know, to me. So that will always stay in my mind as the most devastating thing that happened when I was on the air.

CW: Did you get any commentaries?

HL: From that, a lot of people would see me and they would chuckle and they would say, “I heard about your cat caller,” you know, something like that. So, mostly men would tease me than women about it, because that was really comical, you know. Guys would say that to me all the time, they would say, “Oh, I know how you felt that day when that lady wanted you to announce about her husband,” They’d say, “I felt your pain.” I’d say “Thanks, but no thanks.” (both laugh)

CW: Among the people who came through who were maybe international, or nationally known, the, the R&B artist, or, you know soul artists, whatever. Are there any of those who stand out who you interviewed on your program?

HL: Quite a few of them stand out, I mean the list goes on and on and on and on. And I’ll never forget Ike and Tina Turner. I’ll never forget them when I brought them to Charlotte, to the Park Center Auditorium. And he chose to fight her behind the curtain at intermission. You know, he was really brutal toward her, and I mention it in my book too, you know, that Tina Turner, she didn’t deserve to be stomped like that for nothing. But if you didn’t sing it the way he thought you should’ve been out there singing it you know, then he’s ready to fight you. You know, black your eyes, and have to put on makeup, heavy, to disguise it, to go back for the second half of your show. And I hadn’t been used to seeing women being beat up by abusive husband. And I had heard he was a fool, but I, I, I approached him and told him, this is my town, this is my

show, you are not going to land no hits in this building. I don't care what you do once you leave here, but while my show's going on, it's not going to be any bloodshed on the stage here. Unless he was seeing her bleed, he just wasn't happy. So I had to step up and tell him, "You're not doing that in here. You see all these security guards, and police, and fire department I have here? You're not going to do, I'm not going to be written up in the *Observer* tomorrow that I had a show and you came on and made a disaster out of it, that's not going to happen." And when he, "Yes ma'am, yes ma'am." And he sat down and left her alone. Yeah, you mean, you know, people will take what you dump on them if you keep taking the, the trash, you know. But I told him this, "Whenever she's on a show that I bring to town, and she's one of my artists, my entertainers, I'm going to be fair with her and everybody else and I'm going to pay you what I'm supposed to do according to the contract. But the fighting, that violence, there's no place here for that. Because I don't get beat at home, and you're not going to come here and beat nobody. Even if she is your wife, or your significant other, you're not fighting on the stage at intermission." So you know, those kind of things stand out, you know.

CW: Now, your role, obviously you were saying that you were really community operators. I mean, it wasn't limited to the radio station, you got out and into the community. When did that start happening to you?

HL: Pretty soon, pretty soon. I just got involved in being in the community. That was a part of being, a part of radio, a personality. You can't be a personality in a block, inside a box all the time. You've got to get outside the box. And I started by going to churches and gospel programs, gospel concerts, getting exposed that way and through schools. I was always going to different schools, middle school, well it was not middle then, it was junior high school is what they call it, and senior high, and elementary. I got involved on that basis, the church route and the school route, then moved on up to the auditoriums and the concert halls and this kind of thing.

CW: So were you usually invited? The people in the community would invite you to come and be there, maybe to emcee something?

HL: Yes, that was pretty much, you know, what it was. I was always invited. I never was a person that barged my way in on nothing because I always needed to rest. So you know, unless you invited me to come, I didn't, you know go barging in.

CW: It wasn't that you were looking for talent out there, it came to you.

HL: It came to me, it did, and in abundance, it came, you know because I worked with everybody. So it kept, if I did a great job and had success at a program, that spreaded to the next college or the next high school, or the next church, or the next wherever, you know. And they would hire me again for the next year, so you kept your calendar filled all the time.

CW: What kind of events would these usually be?

HL: Talent shows, that was the big thing back in that day, talent shows. I went to Johnson C. Smith to judge a talent show and to emcee a talent show. That's where you know, everybody that thought they could sing, or dance, or whatever your talent might be, choreography, or whatever. You know, you would display your talent, and we would go and judge. They'd have somebody

from the school, somebody from the community, somebody from TV, me from radio, and somebody else in the arts. You know, these five or six judges, and we all would get together and make a tally on who we thought was number one, or number two, or number three in the ballet contest, or whatever, you know the talent was they displayed. So that's how I came into managing the group, the Appreciations group that I managed for a number of years and did songwriting for them, they all were individual singers on the show. And I liked them so much that I suggested to them after the show that they form a group of five guys. And they said, "I don't know about that, I like singing by myself," or "I don't know how I would like a group," I said, "Well here's my card, just think about it. If you ever change your mind and want me to come to a rehearsal, I see you all becoming a very famous group like the Temptations and the Four Tops. I foresee that in you, but not as individuals at this time. So good day, good bye." And about two or three weeks later, I got a call at the radio station. "We're ready to have you come and talk to us further about forming a group." Because that's, that's, you know, I caught them off surprise, you know, when I first mentioned it. So I did get with them and they rehearsed, and I liked it even more. I was just smitten by them. And they got the bug too, and we started rehearsing twice every week after that. And when I thought they were ready, I formed a line of places for them to appear, and they did a great job. Everybody was hollering for more, more, more, more, more.

Minidisc 1 ends.

End of Interview.