

WAYNE LAWRENCE

Interview 281a

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Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, Dr. Wayne Lawrence reminisces about his life and career, particularly about his work as the first director of the Burke Center. Dr. Lawrence speaks about his childhood and school days, his early career at the Lufkin State School and the Travis State School. He worked as a psychologist and supervised dormitories and residents in both institutions. In 1974 he moved back to Angelina County to direct the area's Mental Health and Mental Retardation agency, known as the Burke Center. He worked for the Center for over 9 years, starting its programs, hiring the staff, and working with judges and commissioners and citizens in 13 area counties. Following his time at the Burke Center, Dr. Lawrence worked in private practice. In this interview he mentions Ward Burke, Bill Beaver, Si Morrison, and Susan Rushing, among others, for their contributions to the advancement of MHMR care in Texas and in Angelina County, specifically.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): Today's date is Tuesday November 29, 2016. My name is Jonathan Gerland and I'm with Dr. Wayne Lawrence. We're at the History Center today and we are going to do an oral history interview. Dr. Lawrence what brought you to East Texas?

Wayne Lawrence (hereafter WL): Well I actually was born in East Texas, in Longview and spent my elementary school years there and had a wonderful family, grandparents participated in helping raise me, my maternal grandparents. My father, who was in World War II, fought in Germany in the tank corps. Survived that and then returned after he was honorably discharged from the Army, and about 8 or 9 years later was killed in a plane crash. The first time he ever flew, a friend of his wanted to take him on a joy ride, and they took off from the Gregg County Airport and crashed on takeoff. So my mother and I lived through that, and that is when my maternal grandparents really started participating in helping raise me. Mother had to work at that point.

JG: What year were you born?

WL: In '44, November 1944.

JG: So your father was overseas at the time?

WL: Yes, he had come back on some kind of furlough or something and they had gotten married at one of the Army posts in Colorado and then I was born later. But he was discharged actually, I believe in 19...early '45, I believe it was.

JG: So before the war ended?

WL: Yes, actually before I think it was officially ended. But he did see action there.

JG: Your father and mother both grew up in the Longview area?

WL: In the northeast Texas area. My dad was from the Mount Pleasant area and Mother basically yes, she went to high school in Longview. Neither of them had the opportunity to attend college. And Mother, unbeknownst to me at the time, saved all of my dad's, he got some type of veterans death benefit, or she did, I did. I think it actually came in my name. And she saved all that every month until it was time for me to go to college. And she told me, anytime she addressed me as "boy" I knew it was time to really listen. And she used to tell me when I was young, she said, "Boy, you're going to college. You are going to college; that is not negotiable." She said, "You can go wherever you want to go and you can major in whatever you want to major in, that is up to you." But she said, "I hope you will major in something that will be in the line of helping people."

JG: Were you the only child born to that union?

WL: Yes, I was. My mother some years later remarried and my step-father and her had one other child, my half brother, and he lives over in the Lockhart area. He is the Director of Information Technology for Austin Community College. He is my go to guy on anything computer. But after...a few years after my dad died, mother did remarry and she married a man who graduated from LeTourneau College there in Longview. They met through the church we were attending. And after he graduated as an electrical engineer, he was employed by IBM. And so, in 1956 or '57 he was assigned to San Jose, California for a training school and mother and I drove out there for them to get married. It took us three days driving to get to San Jose and looking back on it, we didn't know it at the time, but looking back on it, that turns out that was the very beginning of Silicone Valley when we were there with that IBM training school. Then once he completed that, we moved to the Dallas area and lived a couple of places and eventually moved to Garland, and that is where I ended up going to junior high and high school. I graduated from high school at Garland High in '62 and at the time there was only one high school there. They had just opened south Garland I think a year or two before I graduated and Garland was just starting to grow at the time. Now it has six or seven AAAAAA schools of its own. It is a big city, obviously. When I finished high school there, I went to North Texas, just strictly because I wasn't a very serious student at the time and didn't...

JG: University of North Texas at Denton?

WL: Right, it was North Texas State, then.

JG: North Texas State.

WL: ...and thought I wanted to major in accounting and I took one class in that and learned real quickly that wasn't for me. Then I went into pre-med, but I took some psychology classes as electives and completely enjoyed those so I just sort of gravitated

to psychology and ended up majoring in it and minored in management. And received my bachelor's degree in psych, preclinical psychology they called it at the time, in three and half years and then immediately started on my masters and finished that in a year and a half. So in five years I had both degrees because I had gone straight through summer school and everything, working periodically along the way. My wife and I, my wife Patsy, and I married in November of '65 right after I turned 21, and she was a year ahead of me, so she graduated and started teaching in Dallas and at the time we lived on \$316 a month. I remember that vividly! We lived fine. We had a brand new apartment, never lived in before, and we had bought a brand new '66 Volkswagen, and our apartment was \$100 a month and our car payment was \$100 a month, so that left us about \$100 a month to live on and we were fine! So anyway, after I finished my master's degree I was ready for a break and I needed to work to get some money, so we applied and fortunately I got a job at Lufkin State School, and thanks to Bill Beaver primarily, and Si Morrison. And went to work there and worked there about two years as a psychologist and then I decided I really wanted to get my PhD and...

JG: Did your wife teach here?

WL: Yes, she worked at the State School on what was called a HIP Grant. [Hospital Improvement Program]

JG: Can you say what that stood for?

WL: Well I was afraid you were going to ask me.

JG: I guess it is capital HIP.

WL: Yes, HIP [Hospital Improvement Program] and right now I cannot remember exactly what it stood for but it was a federal grant for a certain number of dormitories at the state school at that time. And we implemented what was called a behavior modification or conditioning program for self help training of the people who lived there and it was very, very successful. She participated in that as did I, and then after a couple of years I...I want to back up. I mentioned earlier we lived on \$316 when she was teaching and when we moved to Lufkin and we both went to work at the State School my salary was \$9,216 a year and hers was \$5,000 and something and we literally looked at each other thinking about \$14,000 a year and we said to each other, "How are we going to spend all this money?" Because we just weren't used to it and fortunately we were reasonably frugal and saved.

JG: About four times what you were making before, huh?

WL: Exactly. And after working there a little while, Mr. Beaver, Bill Beaver The Superintendent, saw fit to ask me to serve on the weekend call rotation system that they had, because it was obviously a 24 hour, 7 day a week operation and somebody had to be in charge, so when you went on to the weekend call rotation that made you eligible if you wanted to, to live in what they called at the time the housing area. So we moved into the

housing area and had lived in an apartment in Lufkin. We moved out there and at the time that was rent free, so we accumulated some funds and we decided we were going to buy good furniture and we still have some of that furniture today. But anyway Lufkin State School was very, very good to us and I'm thankful again to Mr. Beaver.

JG: And he was the Executive Director there?

WL: Superintendent.

JG: Superintendent.

WL: He was the founding Superintendent and it was one of the first, if not the first State School for the Mentally Retarded that was completely unlocked. That is the way he wanted it and I think he was even hired with that understanding that they wanted to try to do that, and I know he and all the rest of us were real proud of that. The residents, as we called them at the time, weren't confined to the dormitories. But after a couple of years of that I was ready to go back to school, and a gentleman I mentioned earlier, Si Morrison, who had helped me get the job at Lufkin State School, he had transferred to Travis State School in Austin. There were two state schools in Austin at the time, Austin and Travis, and he became or was the Assistant Superintendent at Travis State School. So when I decided I wanted to go to Austin to go to school, get my doctorate, I made contact with him and they offered me a job there, initially as a psychologist. But they were going to get a grant, another grant in the following September or so and that was a grant to what was called to implement the unit system where the entire campus, and this was a very large campus, we had over I believe it was like 1800 residents, and they were almost all very, very profoundly retarded and there had never been any kind of training for them. They were just basically warehoused, like unfortunately, like things used to be. The conditions were deplorable. But we were going to get a grant for the unit system, and so they brought me on board initially as a psychologist with the understanding that when the unit system was implemented, that I would become a unit director. That was done and we divided the campus into five units, each having a certain number of dormitories. I had, my unit was number one, and I had four dorms of very profoundly retarded young men and older men who were all ambulatory. And without being too graphic, I can describe the scene that I saw when I first visited those, I had four dorms. They were all long dormitories with a central, they called them play area in the middle, and then the bedroom wing on each wing and each dorm housed about... and housed was the right word at the time, about 130 men and boys. When I got there they wore no clothes, they didn't know how to cooperate at meal time, so they would grab food off of everyone else's plates and eat like you wouldn't believe. They were not toilet trained, and it was just very inhumane. So, the purpose of the unit system was to implement behavior modification programs or operant conditioning, which I was familiar with from my master's training, where you use a reward technique for desired behavior. If a resident did what you asked him to do, he was immediately rewarded. Initially we used M&M's, and each attendant, each staff person at the time, was trained through a long training process. They had to wear an apron that had pockets in it and they had different flavors of M&M's in them, each pocket, and they were trained to reward desirable behaviors of all kinds and

ignore undesirable behaviors whenever it was possible. And through doing that for about two years, we were able to toilet train essentially all of the residents on unit one. We got them to where they all wore clothing. We had a special arrangement with the prison system where they manufactured durable clothing and they got to where they would wear that. And we had them where they would wear shoes, would eat with a spoon, and the improvement was really, really remarkable. That was characteristic on all five units. It wasn't just the unit that I was with. Some of the things in addition to the progress the clients made that I'm most proud of in that formation of that unit was I hired the first black secretary that had ever been hired at Travis State School. Her name was Tommie Mercer and she was fantastic. Then I hired the first black MSW Social worker as a member of our professional team on Unit One and her name was Darnell Pinkard. Tommie is still in Austin, she retired from Travis State School and Darnell I believe now lives in California.

JG: What was the racial makeup of the residents?

WL: It was pretty standard. There were all racial makeups, all types there.

JG: Were they integrated?

WL: To some extent. The younger ones were; the older ones were not.

JG: And about what year would this have been?

WL: I first went to Travis in 1969, so to hire two black staff members was pretty unusual in '69 but keep in mind, I didn't tell you this, but Travis was the geographic location of that school was out on the east side on Webberville Road, it is called and, the east side of Austin was and probably still is predominately minority, so many of the employees were minority and some of the residents, not a lot, but some.

JG: And the residents came from all over the state or...?

WL: They did, all over and.

JG: And Travis State School was approximately how old? How long had there been?

WL: I would say it was probably at least 50 years old, it was pretty old.

JG: Okay, yes.

WL: The dorms that I was over weren't original dorms. Some of the older dorms that were there were two-story and were very, very old. The dorms that I had on unit one were built later, I don't know exactly what year. I would probably say in the '40's, just from the way they looked, '50's maybe.

JG: The behavioral conditions that you just described would that have been the way it was all through the past as well?

WL: Yes, worse.

JG: Worse.

WL: Yes, I could tell you some real horror stories but I don't want to be too graphic.

JG: Yes, well and I didn't really want to...I want to get you to here at some point but at the same time I don't want to keep your flow here of progressing, so...

WL: Well I'm...in my mind at least I'm about to wrap up Travis so, I do want to relay a couple of stories that were very...

JG: But I have a lot of questions that I will save until later but one of them is about funding, you know, but I want that to apply specifically to more of this area but go ahead.

WL: Certainly, two situations, two or three, that come to mind that were very salient and significant during my...I was there at Travis for four years, and the first two were as a psychologist and unit director and then I was promoted to Assistant Superintendent for the last two years.

JG: And that would be over all the dorms?

WL: Yes, I had all five unit directors under my supervision and while I was doing this at Travis I was also, my boss, the Superintendent there who is named Bob Breckinridge, allowed me to work on my doctorate, so I was doing that as well.

JG: At the University of Texas?

WL: Yes, University of Texas. And the situations that come to mind, the first one is a little horrific, but we had a resident who happened to be Hispanic on dormitory nine who was a biter and he had an affinity for biting the end of peoples noses off, very serious. We tried everything to stop him, put him in isolation, put a face mask on him where he couldn't get it off... and all this was permitted at that time – probably wouldn't be now. Finally after he had done this quite a few times, I went to the Superintendent and I said, "Mr. B," we called him Mr. B, I said, "Mr. B. I don't know what else to do. I think we need to take him to the dentist and have his front teeth pulled out because we cannot stop him and it is not fair to the other residents and their families." So, they did, the Superintendent instructed the dentist staff to remove his teeth. But, on a more positive note we had another resident, who we didn't know it at the time...at the time he was called an idiot savant, he had a very special talent and that is usually attributed to somebody who is maybe intellectually challenged, but who can play on the piano, play classical music or all kinds of different unusual talents. But this person's talent was making keys. And we kept coming up and noticing that our brooms were disappearing

and finally we realized that he was getting the brooms to remove the wire because he could make a key and he didn't have to have a model to go by. He could feel it and he could insert it like in the lock of a car and feel the tumblers move and he could make that key where it would open that car door. And I saw him do it.

JG: Just with the wire...

WL: Just from the broom wire.

JG: ...that held the straw on the stick?

WL: That is correct.

JG: Wow!

WL: Pretty fantastic, but anyway there are other stories I could tell but I will move on. Then...

JG: So that gave you kind of a wide range of experience?

WL: Yes, all the way from clinical to managerial. Fortunately, I had minored in management with my bachelor's degree, which proved to be invaluable. Then when I went to Unit Director to Assistant Superintendent, that gave me the perspective of basically running a very large organization because a Superintendent, really his role was not totally external, but he had to deal with the political arena, the state board of MHMR and the central office of Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and parent groups; a lot of external responsibility. So my responsibility was more to help operate the institution itself internally, so I gained a lot of experience there. Anyway thanks to my wife Patsy and our two daughters, who were both born in Austin, they have supported me all these years and all these various endeavors. When I finished my doctorate there at UT Austin, that was in I believe May of 1973 I worked at Travis for almost another year and I realized I was ready to do something a little different. The institutional setting was, in my opinion still is necessary for certain types of people, but I could see that the future of mental health and mental retardation, or whatever one chooses to call that field now, was really in the community mental health centers that they had just started coming on board. Actually, the federal government passed the Community Mental Health Act in 1963 under President John Kennedy and then Texas at the time was still very progressive as a state in terms of these types of issues. So in 1965 the state legislature wrote what was commonly then referred to as House Bill 3, which was to form the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and allow the formation or support the formation of community MHMR centers. So that was all sort of just starting in Texas when I realized I was ready to do something different rather than the institutional setting. So, I heard that there was a planning grant in the Deep East Texas area funded by the Hogg Foundation for mental health.

JG: And just for the recording that is Hogg, H-o-g-g.

WL: Correct, in Austin, they are based in Austin and always have done an enormous amount of support funding for mental health activities of all kind, research etc. So, they had contracted with a mental health group in Nacogdoches and SFA [Stephen F. Austin State University] for a planning grant to help organize or see if it was possible to organize a regional mental health center in this Deep East Texas area, the 13 counties that one at the time typically thought of as Deep East Texas, all the way from Nacogdoches and Shelby down to Hardin.

JG: Would that be the same as the Deep East Texas Council of Governments?

WL: Right, it was. They have now changed it to 12. They have moved Hardin County in with Beaumont which is really where it belonged all the time anyway. But, yes it was the same counties as DETCOG, Deep East Texas Council of Governments, and so the planning grant was funded by the Hogg Foundation, Dr. Bruce Bailey who was a psychologist at Stephen F. Austin at the time. He has since deceased, real fine...great guy. I worked with him at lengths when we moved back here. But Bruce contacted all of the various county judges and was instrumental in helping communicate with them regarding the needs for community MHMR Center in this area. He eventually got everyone of them, the commissioner's courts to sign an agreement saying that they would help in the formation of that. They didn't obligate, at that point they didn't obligate to give any funding, but that would come later. But Bruce Bailey, to his credit, and the Hogg Foundation as well helped get that all organized. That was all done... let's see I came here in '74, probably starting in roughly '72 that is when that leg work started. And in that process Bruce then also started contacting some of the local leaders in the mental health and mental retardation field in this area. The primary one of course being Ward Burke and his wife, and they were of course immensely interested in this possibility. From that they worked with a county judge in Polk County, Judge Peyton Walters, who later went to work for Charlie Wilson, and Peyton was also extremely interested in the formation of the center to have a place to help put people who were mentally ill rather than sticking them in the local county jails. That was really the interest of most of the county judges. That was a real problem for them, one of their major problems and so Peyton hosted a meeting along with DETCOG in Livingston at one point, and people who were interested around the region came to that meeting and it was really the first organized meeting regarding the possible formation of the center, the community center. And Ward was there, Ward Burke was there, and George Gee from Jasper County. I believe Ben Hillie from Polk County and a few others that I couldn't name right now, but they talked about the formation of the board and who would be on the board and someone nominated Ward Burke as chair. Peyton has told me himself when that name was thrown out in nomination, all other nominations for chair ceased. There were no other nominations. Ward was looked upon as such a leader in this area that everybody realized he should be the chair. From that then, Ward and a few county judges then started contacting other interested people from these 13 counties to determine their interest in serving on a board of trustees. A board of trustees for a community mental health and mental retardation center is a very interesting concept. It is not a state agency, it's not a federal agency, it's a political subdivision that is structured much like a school district or

even a hospital district without the taxing authority, but the local boards of all the community centers, and now there is 27 of them that cover the entire state of Texas, they're all local people who have legal authority over the governance of that community MHMR Center. They are not answerable to the state or to the feds. They are the legal authority and in some counties they call themselves, like in Harris County they are the MHMR Authority of Harris County. Brazos County I believe is the same way. So, the board then, the only people they are really answerable to are the ones who appoint them and that is their respective county commissioner courts; the county judge and the commissioner courts appoint board members from their respective counties to serve on the board of trustees. Now this particular center was the first one set up in the state of Texas from the beginning on a regional basis. All the other centers that had been formed at the time were formed in a county or even a city. They were one county, some later expanded into a adjacent counties, but the state was interested in establishing this community center from the beginning on a regional basis to see if it would work. Okay, well the board gets formed and they have their first, really their organizational meeting which they elected officers on March 28, which was a Thursday evening of 1974. It was...they did a lot of things that night. They elected their officers, they selected their executive director, the first executive director and they interviewed all of the candidates and I believe there were 7 of us at the time, 7 individual candidates. They interviewed those people.

JG: Now, you were living in Austin at the time?

WL: That is correct. We had ... that evening we drove to Conroe, that is where my wife's parents live, and we spent the night the preceding day there, and after the interview process we went back to Conroe and spent the night.

JG: How did you hear about the possibility of a position do you remember?

WL: Through several sources. As you may remember, I was interested in changing and moving into the community center movement anyway, and I knew that Ward Burke and Bill Beaver...

JG: Through your time at the State School.

WL: ...when I was here before. I knew Bill Beaver from working for him out there and I knew Ward and from being members of First United Methodist Church.

JG: In Lufkin.

WL: ...In Lufkin and I can't exactly remember how I heard, but I feel like I heard probably through sources in the central office of TDMHMR [Texas Department of Mental Health & Mental Retardation] because I had a lot of coworkers and friends there.

JG: And that is the Texas Department of Mental Health?

WL: ...and Mental Retardation. It was a state agency if you recall that was formed out of House Bill 3 in 1965 and it was over all of the state schools, state hospitals and the community centers. That was its legal responsibility. I worked with them in my role as Assistant Superintendent at Travis and I'm sure I heard there and I believe I heard also from Ward Burke.

JG: Did you have any thoughts going in, any expectations? I mean what was your thought process going in? How did you feel about it?

WL: I felt excited. My wife and I were both very excited. She as I mentioned was originally from Conroe and I was from Longview so we were excited about the possibility...

JG: Being in the middle.

WL: ...of getting back to east Texas.

JG: And you had lived in Lufkin before.

WL: Had lived in Lufkin before and had friends obviously and that was exciting to us. It was familiar. It wasn't like starting over somewhere brand new and I really wanted to get, because I could see that the effort the movement, the action, was going to be in the community mental health center area of the Texas Department of MHMR. So, I submitted my application, and keep in mind I had finished my doctorate and I was ready to kind of make a move of some kind anyway, and they called me for an interview. The meeting I alluded to earlier was held at the Pine Bough Restaurant here in Diboll. The restaurant was closed. I don't remember the exact hour that it started. I would say 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening. It was still daylight, I remember that, and it was dark when we finished.

JG: And there were seven of you?

WL: As I recall there were seven of us. There were quite a few people.

JG: But the interviewers had already had your applications and resumes?

WL: Yes, they had screened them to some extent. I don't know how much, but we were all seated in the outer area. They had a partition of some kind. They had a board meeting table, a long table they were seated behind and then there was a partition and when they would interview somebody they would call that person by name and then all the board and that person would file into a separate room and it would be closed off. And Mr. Burke was very careful as he always was, he wanted to be legal. He would say, "the board is now going into executive session, we won't make any decisions in there. We will come back out and reconvene in an open meeting before we make any decisions." He always said that. (laughter) That night and in the future for my entire tenure he said that. So anyway, they interviewed everybody, and you know, it was a little awkward because

you had to sit with the other applicants while they were interviewing another person and then they would come out and another one would go in and be interviewed and you just had to wait.

JG: Was there any visiting or small talk or anything?

WL: Yes, we visited; there were two or three of them that I knew personally. It wouldn't hurt to name any names. Raymond Vann, who worked at DETCOG at the time, was one of the applicants, and Bill Dillard, who worked at the State Department of Mental Health and Retardation in the community services division, was an applicant. And my hunch at the time when I saw, when I walked in the room and saw who the applicants were, I thought, "Bill Dillard is going to get this. He works for the State Department. He is going to get it." But anyway, they interviewed all of us and then they came back out. Well after they had interviewed all of us they went back into closed session and they talked among themselves with all the rest of us waiting out there. (laughter) And Susan Rushing has described this as sounding like a beauty contest (laughter) but anyway...

JG: Ya'll just were waiting.

WL: Just waiting, and this went on for a couple of hours at least because they were very thorough.

JG: Did y'all have anything to eat or anything while you waited? The restaurant was closed you said.

WL: The restaurant was closed, so I don't believe we did.

JG: Just closed for the day or was closed at that time?

WL: I think Mr. Burke had arranged for it to be closed to do this. That was my assumption.

JG: Because somewhere in there they had kind of gone to different schedules and things, the restaurant itself, and it didn't run too much longer after this. But anyway I was just curious.

WL: That was a very interesting evening so after they went back into closed session and talked about all of us they came back out and they made the announcement and selected me as the founding Executive Director and they excused all the others. They said, "You're free to go," and they asked me to stay. The newspaper came, the Diboll Free Press was there and took pictures and I don't think the Lufkin Daily News was there that night. I believe the picture they used came from the Free Press.

JG: Was it Paul Durham?

WL: Yes, oh yes, I think Paul Durham was pretty much it at the time.

JG: Now he wasn't there the whole time, was he?

WL: No, no.

JG: He got called in?

WL: I'm sure they made arrangements, told him about what time to come or something. I was not in that loop you know, you understand. (laughter)

JG: Yes! And you were maybe a little surprised?

WL: I was a little surprised. Looking back on it I think probably one of the reasons I might have been selected was my experience at the Lufkin State School and knowing Mr. Beaver, because we are still friends. We still go to breakfast periodically and he is 98, 97 or 98 now. But, I'm sure...I'm speculating now, but I feel sure that Ward Burke had spoken to Bill Beaver about me privately because I know Ward Burke and I had those kinds of conversations about other people in the future. I kind of think that is probably one of the things that swayed them toward me and I had some good administrative experience at Travis particularly. Anyway, that was done and after we stood around and visited and the newspaper took pictures; there were six I believe of the nine board members. I really need to name who those nine people were because they provided a lot of the vision for the creation of this organization, which I should say is now called Burke. But of course the nine members are Ward Burke from Angelina County, W. J. Gentry from Houston County. He was a retired school superintendent. V. B. Woods from Trinity County, president of the Lovelady State Bank and he was our treasurer, and Ben Hilly from Livingston or Polk County, and he represented Polk and San Jacinto County. Our board had nine members. That was in the articles of incorporation and with 13 counties some counties had to be in clusters with one representative and Polk and San Jacinto was one of those. Then we had Jerry Self, Reverend Jerry Self from Austin Heights Baptist Church from Nacogdoches County. Then we had Cleo Hines, who represented Sabine, San Augustine and Shelby Counties, then Mr. George Gee, pharmacist, who represented Jasper and Newton, and Judge Emmitt Lack from Hardin County, and Judge Tom Mann from Tyler County. That was the original nine board members and I want to say they were truly outstanding people. Most all of them were very active, very involved, Judge Lack had more difficulty because he had an hour and a half drive when we met in Lufkin. He missed some meetings because of that, and Sabine San Augustine and Shelby, Cleo Hines, same situation. It is a pretty good drive from there, but they were all very involved, but they didn't micromanage. They let me manage the center and they did the policy determination. The six board members who were at the meeting the night at The Pine Bough Restaurant were of course Ward, W. J. Gentry, V. B. Woods, Ben Hilly, George Gee and Rev. Self, so they constituted the quorum that night allowing them to make the selection of an Executive Director.

JG: Not necessarily specific questions, but what were some of the concerns as you can remember that they might have had when they were talking to you when they interviewed you?

WL: You know I don't remember very many.

JG: That is alright.

WL: If I might digress a minute, when I was finishing my PhD, I do remember this one because at UT at the time you had the stages in finishing a PhD, you had a series of oral exams that you had to pass and then you had your dissertation presentation and you had to write your dissertation and then at the very end you had what was called the final oral. And they could wash you out at that point and time still and you had to go before your whole committee and I remember vividly that day because I walked in and you were seated in a single chair out in front of the long table of your committee. And the first...you reminded me of this with what you just asked. The first question they asked me was how do you feel about euthanasia for the mentally retarded? And I thought wow! We didn't study that in any textbook, but fortunately I answered I would be opposed to it and that satisfied them. (laughter) Anyway, getting back to your specific question I really don't remember much about the exchange that evening at The Pine Bough other than I do remember they wanted to know about my background and I went through that and my family they asked about that, but beyond that I really don't remember.

JG: That is fair enough.

WL: That was a long time ago and a little bit of stress.

JG: Well things like your specific question I was just asking to see if it prompted any memories but that is fine. So, you were hired and quite a few challenges I imagine.

WL: Yes, (laughter) that was a really interesting time in the whole process. We didn't have very much funding at that point and I think we got some, a little bit of money from the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation and we got a little bit of money from the planning grant from SFA [Stephen F. Austin]. And, at the time the center was composed of myself as executive director and my secretary whose name was Lee Mayberry.

JG: Did you hire that person or was that person already here?

WL: I did. I hired her.

JG: Okay.

WL: I hired her, and it was a very good hire too I might add. She is still a personal friend and she was absolutely outstanding. I couldn't have done it without her and she knows that. We've had that discussion before. We had to do a lot in a short period of time

and she was doing it on a typewriter, this was before word processors. And we had to prepare a budget for the first operating year, which would have been fiscal '75.

JG: Were y'all on the same rotation as the state or calendar year or the state?

WL: Yes, September through August. And, keep in mind I was hired on March 28th. I believe I came on something like April 4th or 6th, right after Easter.

JG: Wow, just a week later.

WL: Right, because I had already kind of given Travis my notice of my intentions that I was planning on leaving. And, so we, Mr. Bill Beaver was kind enough and I'm sure he had an ulterior motive too, he wanted to keep an eye on me and us, but he offered us free office space at the Lufkin State School. So, Lee and I officed in one office directly across the hall from Mr. Beaver's office, so he could see what we were up to (laughter) and we prepared the budget...

JG: Do you think Mr. Burke had something to do with that to?

WL: Oh yes, oh sure. I'm sure he told Mr. Beaver that would probably be a good idea. (laughter) But Mr. Beaver, you know the image of some community MHMR centers back then, and to some extent maybe still is, was that they had the reputation they wanted to close down the institutions. Mr. Beaver knew that was not my intention, that I had the institutional background and I saw the value of them, and of course he and I were personal friends too, and he knew that I wanted to work with him in that regard. To help reduce his population, which was in his best interest, but certainly not to shut them down. But we officed there for a period of April, May, June probably three months.

JG: Where did you live?

WL: Well at first, when I first came that early April I lived in the...what is motel out on North Timberland?

JG: Sun-N-Pines?

WL: Yes, no this was further in.

JG: Okay.

WL: Anyway I can't remember.

JG: I was just curious if you lived there at the State School again since you lived there before.

WL: No, I lived there a week or two at that motel out on North Timberland until my wife and family could get moved. Then that was later but I will get back to that in a minute.

JG: That is quite a transition to be interviewed on the 28th and start on the 6th and live in Austin and come to Lufkin. That is the reason why I was asking.

WL: Yes, it was very...but it needed to go quickly because we had to do that budget for the coming year and then we had to start doing the biennium budget for the following two years, which had to be done based upon Jimmy Carters zero based budgeting processes, which was brand new to everybody. And that document being a two year budget projection was about two inches thick with legal size paper on each page and it was bound and Lee typed that on a typewriter. It was a monumental task of typing and retyping and correcting and white outs. It was just incredible the amount of work that she did.

JG: And again, you are starting from scratch.

WL: Scratch.

JG: The whole thing, you have to know what you need and then what it cost and how you were going to fund it.

WL: And the staff of community services in the Texas Department of MHMR was immensely helpful to me at the time, along with all the local support that we got. People just welcomed us with open arms because the services, so obvious the services were needed, and it got very little resistance. I will get into what resistance we did encounter in a little bit.

JG: I mean I would imagine one of the main challenges would be identifying what was needed. The specifics, and being in touch with all those...that is a pretty big region.

WL: That is very true and we went about... our strategy on that I think turned out to be proven as sound. Not only did we have the nine board members and the county judges and I worked closely with all 13 county judges in determining what they felt like they needed. But then as we got into each county I would go into the county and I would identify two or three people who were interested and somewhat of a leader in the field of social health, social services, mental health of any kind and meet with them and then ask them to pick other individuals to form what we called county advisory councils. Each of the 13 counties had its own county advisory council composed of anywhere from 5 to 9 people and they were just interested citizens.

JG: They reported to you or to the judges or the commissioner's court?

WL: They didn't have to report to anybody in an administrative sense; they just provided input.

JG: It was just input, so it was just purely volunteer and you could take it or leave it.

WL: Right, usually we took it, obviously. As we hired staff in each of these counties, then of course the local staff member in the respective counties would work closely with that county advisory council and they would really be their regular contact. Then I, on my many trips to these 13 counties, I would meet with those county advisory councils periodically and gather input as to what they would think would be needed most.

JG: But it wasn't required, I mean it wasn't like well I got to reschedule because we are not going to be able to get a quorum or anything like that?

WL: No quorum rules.

JG: Just voluntary assistance.

WL: On the county advisory councils, no quorum rules, no by-laws, very informal, but very, very, very helpful.

JG: Okay and that was sort of your idea to do that or was that kind of...

WL: Well it was the only way we could come up with a plan to solicit input because you know Newton County is a long way from here. And you know at the time I didn't know much about Newton County or Tyler County or some of the others. I got to know all 13 county judges on a personal level and went to see them regularly because I felt like that was essential.

JG: How, since those are elected positions, was that pretty stable? The judges that were in place when you were hired? Was there some consistency there?

WL: Well there was some turn over, there but in most counties judges would serve two or three terms.

JG: Okay, since you said it was so vital to have that participation I was just curious as to how the turn over might be.

WL: Well let me stress how vital it was to have that support. Our first budget that Lee and I worked up for fiscal '75, beginning in September of '74. We were working at the State School and then we later changed locations. I will come back to that. But we had that summer to prepare the budget and we had a hearing in May in Austin at the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation where I had to go and justify that budget to the TDHMR, because they were going to be the funding agency at that point and time. They had accumulated state appropriations and earmarked them for this center and I had to present the budget and justify it and fortunately they approved it. But, it was \$623,000 and some change.

JG: The budget or what you got from the state?

WL: The budget. We got \$400... let me look at my notes here. We got \$475... \$73,000 from the state. We had to get \$110,000 from the counties.

JG: So pretty much two-thirds from the state?

WL: Yes it was about 79 percent.

JG: Oh 79 percent, okay, more than three-fourths.

WL: Almost 80. A little less than 80, but each county once we got to the point of talking about what kind of services do you want we had to convince them, and this was a major job of mine along with the particular board member that the commissioner's court had to allocate funds for the community mental health center because the state money was contention upon local match. At that time it was called state grant and aid funding and it was an eighty-twenty match basically. So, we had to get \$110,000 or a little over from all of the counties and that was broken up based upon size of the counties. I don't have a county breakdown for funding request right now but obviously Angelina was the largest each year.

JG: Was it based on simple population?

WL: Basically population.

JG: Or mental health census or something, just straight population.

WL: The budget of the county, population what we felt like they could afford, you know. We didn't ask very much of Sabine County or San Augustine or the very poor counties, but they had to come up with something. And, I want to hasten and say they always did. They were very, very supportive. They might have been slow, a couple of counties might have been a little slow (laughter) because they were poor, but the board and I knew that we would be patient and welcome their funding whenever we got it so. So, the rest of the money came from client fees, donations, just odds and ends, United Way, that kind of thing. But anyway the \$623,000 was our first budget and we got that approved by the state and then we knew that we could operate that following year. Well later on, keep in mind now we are still in the summer of '74, September hasn't arrived yet, and that is when we could start trying to deliver services into some of the counties. Well we knew we needed to hire some more administrative staff, so we needed some more space, so the City of Lufkin offered us six free offices in the old upstairs portion of the Parks & Recreation Building on First Street, Frank and First [streets]. So, we moved in there and we remained there for, I don't remember, a year or so and we started outgrowing that and then we moved across the street into the building that I think commonly was referred to as where J. C. Penney's was at the time. Larry Byrd owned the building and we rented one floor from him and then the next year we rented the second

floor from him because we were starting to grow pretty rapidly because we were delivering services out in these counties.

I want to go back and expand on that a little bit about the county advisory council. I'll never forget meeting in Hardin County one evening, or one day, actually it was during the day, with the county advisory council and they decided that they felt like they wanted either a half-way house or a sheltered workshop is what they wanted. I said, "Well I think we might be able to do that, I can't promise it. I'll have to present it to the board, but let me go back and present it to them and see what they think." And, as the meeting concluded one of the members of the advisory council, who happened to be a minister down in Hardin County called me aside and he said, "Dr. Lawrence I need to speak with you privately if I could." And I said, "Okay." He said, "If you put one of these programs in Hardin County," he said, "is it going to be integrated?" Now this was '74. I said, "Well of course it will be integrated." I came from Austin so that wasn't an issue for me. Even though I grew up in segregated Longview, I just, I had always known that segregation was wrong. But anyway he said, "Is it going to be integrated?" I said, "Of course it will be." He said, "Well, then don't put it in Lumberton." I said, "What do you mean? Why not?" He said, "Because they will kill them." I said, "Come on now, come on now, you don't mean that." He said, "Trust me, they will kill them. Don't put it in Lumberton." And I said, "Don't worry it won't be put in Lumberton." And, it wasn't. It was put in Silsbee. But that is a good example of the kind of local input that was invaluable, that was provided by the various advisory councils. So, we moved administrative offices. We moved across First Street into a two... I think it was a three or four story building and ended up having two of those floors and along about '76, so we had been in operation about two years at this point. We were growing very, very fast because the need was there. I became aware of a grant possibility from HEW, which at that time was Department of Health Education and Welfare, to fund a building which would be... as we drew up the plans we envisioned it as a day treatment program and administration building. Day treatment meaning a place for someone with mental illness or emotional problems to come during the day to participate in activities of various kinds including therapy, etc. to get out of the home and have someplace to go. It is somewhat like a sheltered workshop, except they don't earn money, they don't produce a product. It is more of an activity process. So, we applied for that grant and we received notice that we were going to be funded. So that was '76, so I called a friend of mine who was an architect here in town, Floyd Marcellus and I ask Floyd, I said, "Floyd will you ride around with me because I need to find three or four acres of land because we are going to get this building." He said, "Sure." So we rode all over Lufkin and rode up and down Timberland and all over Frank Street and the other different parts of town and nothing looked suitable and Floyd's comment as an architect, he said, "Wayne the reason this doesn't look suitable is that this really has seen its heyday and it's topped out and it's going to start going downhill." And he said, "If you want to think about the future, you really need to think about some land on the south part of Lufkin. That is the way the city is going to grow." So I said, "okay."

JG: That was right before I guess the Lufkin Mall was built and all that.

WL: Oh yes, I don't remember the year they were built.

JG: '79 or '80, maybe.

WL: Probably. So, we rode around and I found a piece of property that looks like it might be suitable and I called Richard Youngblood, who was the owner of all that, basically that family land out there on the south loop which now really is restaurant row. And we started negotiating and I bought three acres, not me personally, the Center through what is called Pineywoods Mental Health Association. That is another thing if we have time we can talk about. Community Mental Health Centers at that time could not own real property. It wasn't legal so we formed a separate private non-profit corporation called Pineywoods Mental Health and it was legal for that entity to purchase the land and then we could pay them lease payments to acquire it. So, we acquired this three acres which is right next to Chili's presently, 4101 S. Medford was the street address, and so we got the grant and built the building and the Temple Foundation was generous enough to give us \$46,000 as our local match portion to receive the federal funding for the grant. When we had the dedication ceremony, Mr. Arthur Temple was kind enough, gracious enough to take time from his busy schedule to come help us cut the ribbon and give the keynote speech. He had on his hat and gave a real nice talk and as usual was very... showed his true leadership in this area.

So, we moved into that building and was there for I think they occupied it for around thirty years and then I understand from Susan Rushing, who is the current CEO of Burke that property was sold, the \$40,000 piece of property was sold I believe for \$1.5 million here about a year and half, two years ago so, it was a good investment. It was good for Burke. They ended up with a nice chunk of change, as often time is said. And I should say at this point, speaking of Susan, that I had the good fortune of employing all three, or the other two rather Executive Directors that followed me. I employed Jim McDermott. He was the Director of staff development and training and support services. He worked for me for several years and when I left in '83, I recommended Jim as my successor and the board saw fit to select him. So while I was still Executive Director of the center I also employed Susan Rushing as my Executive Assistant and she worked for me for quite a few years and then after McDermott left...I was there for 9 years, almost 10, and McDermott was there for 8 and then Susan was appointed Executive Director or CEO now and she has been in that position for 25 years. So, I think a lot of the stability that the center has enjoyed over the course of its 42 years of existence now is attributable, at least in part to the fact that we're able to select people from within to be the Executive Directors. That fact plus the stability of the board itself in the level of activity of the board, the level of involvement of the board of coming to meetings and participating, those are two primary factors that are important for the stability. The other one I think and I don't think can be emphasized enough when we were about to start having our first board meeting Mr. Burke told me he said, "Now Wayne I want..." he said, "I don't like surprises at board meetings." I said, "okay." He said, "I want you to develop a system whereby we have an agenda and the agenda will have a set of supporting documents accompanying each item and each supporting document will have a recommended motion that you recommend the board to consider, and if possible, to pass." And he said,

“If you will do that,” which I obviously did, he said, “I will call for a motion from the committee chair,” we had three committees of the board, “And then I will call for a second and then we will allow discussion and following discussion I will call for a vote.” And he said, “That is the way I want the meetings to go.” That always struck me as kind of like my mother when she said “boy,” I listened. Mr. Burke said that is the way I want it to go, [then] that is the way I wanted it to go too! So anyway, that is the way the meetings were conducted every month from the beginning. I’m happy to say I just had the opportunity here about a month ago to meet with the board of trustees of the Burke organization on another matter and I saw their agenda and supporting documents and I watched them in action and they function exactly the same way to this day. So, from Mr. Burke’s vision on how to organize a meeting it is gone into the future for 42 years. He truly was a true visionary. So, I should...I’m hesitant to thank people because you always are going to leave some out but there is a few I need to point out individually that were truly, truly, special in the formation of the center. Pardon me I’m getting a little emotional. Of course the original board but beyond that a board member who came on later and served for a long time was Dr. Nancy Speck from Nacogdoches. She was extraordinary. I’ve already mentioned Lee Mayberry, my Executive Secretary, and I should mention another one that I had named Sandy Vann. Both of them worked for me about 4 years each. And another person who was crucial for the success of the organization was Linda Foley Naff, who Mr. Beaver, I disappointed him on this one. I hired a person out of his accounting department. Linda Foley, who became Linda Naff, as my...

JG: N-a-f-f?

WL: N-a-f-f.

JG: Without a k, just f-f.

WL: Yes, Linda Foley, her first husband is deceased, Autrey Foley, he taught at Lufkin High. He and I were old fishing buddies. Anyway, Linda was our accountant and was probably one of the hardest working individuals I’ve ever been around, saved my administrative life many times because of her productivity. I’ve already mentioned Susan Rushing. Bennie Russell, who was over the workshop, part of the workshops, Larry Welker who was over the workshops, Marty Walker from Jasper County who was a workshop director in Jasper County, and I could go on and on. Peyton Walters, I’ve already mentioned as a county judge, Claude Welch, County Judge from Angelina County, all of those people and many, many more were incredibly supportive and helpful. Anytime we needed something they saw to it that we were able to obtain it. They were just great to work with. I think we are at the point and time we’ve done the two budgets and we started delivering services in many of the counties after that first year.

JG: Describe that to a lay person who may not have any familiarity with what we are talking about?

WL: In terms of service?

JG: Yes, talk about services. What did the Burke Center offer and how did you handle that?

WL: At that time it was called the Deep East Texas Regional Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services. (laughter) A very long a cumbersome name, but the board didn't want to call themselves a center.

JG: They didn't want that word center?

WL: No, because it implied one location. In fact the first month we were called a center and at one of the first or second board meeting they voted to change the name to services and so we did. The initial emphasis for services, of course I met with Horace Cardwell, who was at the time CEO of Memorial Hospital here in Lufkin, and we worked out a contractual arrangement to have psychiatric inpatient services and we did that. We made those available to give an alternative to jail for these mentally ill people. If that wasn't helpful then we would transfer them onto Rusk State Hospital, but it would get them out of the jail. That was one of the primary purposes of that. Then we had what we called outpatient clinics staffed by mental health professionals and as well as periodic staffing by a physician or psychiatrist who could prescribe medication. Those were located initially in Nacogdoches and Groveton and Woodville I believe. Then we had halfway houses for the mentally retarded and for alcoholic and drug abusers. We had a halfway house for the mentally retarded here in Lufkin over on First Street. Charlie Wilson came and spoke for the ribbon cutting for that event. And then we had a half way house for alcohol and drug abuse individuals in Center, up in Shelby County. We had sheltered workshops located in...well there was already one here in Lufkin, the Lufkin Workshop and Opportunity Center. The Texas Department of MHMR had been contracting directly with them and then they told us we want you to put that under your umbrella so I met with Doug Nicholson, who was director at the time and we worked that out so they weren't threatened by being under our administrative umbrella. That worked just fine but other workshops... we had one in Jasper County. We had one in Hardin County and others as well. We had outpatient clinics, inpatient services, halfway houses, sheltered workshops; those were the primary services initially. We got those out there, so to speak, in the counties as quickly as possible because it was again, strategically I believed and the board also believed, that we had to show the counties that we could do what we said we wanted to do. We weren't...one of the things I often tried to tell the county commissioner's courts and the county judges were we are not a quote "typical government agency." We are locally controlled. The board of directors, the board of trustees, controls this organization. They're answerable to you because you appoint them and we are going to respond to what your needs are as best we can. We can't meet the needs of everyone, that is not possible, but we can try. And that was our approach and we worked, the entire staff worked very, very, hard those early years because the message I tried to convey with them was we don't have any extra time. We have got to get these services out there quickly and show the county commissioners courts we are going to do what we said we were going to do, so those local funds will keep coming in. Because I didn't feel like we had the luxury of waiting three or four years before we started

providing these necessary services, or they're not going to want to keep giving that money every year. And so if you talk to anybody back then, they will tell you that we all worked really hard. We were moving at a fast pace but it was all possible because the board was so supportive and we had a good staff. We used to have staff meetings, we could have them in our administrative offices in the conference room for awhile until we outgrew that, and then we had to move to the civic center and we had them in there, and now they can't even have them all in one location.

JG: So how many staff did you have after that first biennium, once you got one budget under your belt?

WL: That is a good question. I would say probably 150.

JG: Wow!

WL: We grew really fast because the department wanted us to grow fast.

JG: With only a little over \$600,000?

WL: Well you mentioned the biennium, but that is the second, the next biennium. That first year, I don't know, we probably had the \$600,000, we probably had 20 maybe.

JG: Okay, so do you remember offhand what that second biennium budget was?

WL: I remember ...yes we asked for close to four million; of course we didn't get it. That was for two years. We got, I think it was around two [million dollars] so we grew rapidly. I know the first year, we went from \$600,000 to about \$900,000 that first year, and then the second year of that biennium it was even more. So, we again were growing rapidly. We bought our first van for the transport of clients and I vividly remember that we wanted, myself and the board wanted to do business in the counties. We wanted to spend our money in the counties as much as possible, as opposed to focusing things on Lufkin and Nacogdoches. And our first vans, I don't remember how many we bought, either three or four because we got a special grant for that, and we bought them from the dealer there in Tyler County in Woodville because they gave a good bid and we selected them over other dealers. And the board was proud of that, the fact that we tried to do business out in the counties. So anyway we are rocking along trying to implement as many services as we can. Backing up in time a little bit to our first year, I mentioned earlier that I wanted to talk about the little resistance that we did encounter and it was very, very, stressful, very horrendous. Cost me and some other people sleepless nights. Our first budget of \$623,000, roughly half of that was for mental health and half was for mental retardation.

JG: How do you define the difference?

WL: Of the two?

JG: Yes, again just for a layman.

WL: Well mental retardation is an intellectual issue. It is where you are intellectually challenged in terms of your learning ability. It has nothing...it is not an illness. It is not treatable with medication.

JG: It is a condition.

WL: It is a condition, exactly and there are four classes. Keep in mind the term mental retardation is antiquated now, just like any field. Whatever fields you are in, we all have our glossary and the glossary changes over time, but at the time mental retardation was divided into four categories based upon the IQ score, mild, moderate, severe and profound, with profound being the lowest. I mentioned to you the unit I had at Travis was all profoundly retarded men and boys. But on a standardized intelligence test, whether Stanford-Binet or Wechsler, a person's score could categorize them in one of those categories, along with their social skills, their adaptation abilities; it is not just an IQ score. It is "how do they function?" You know, all of their social abilities. That is mental retardation it is condition. An example of that is down syndrome or Tay-Sachs disorder or other...many, many, many types of mental retardation. Some are genetic like down syndrome; some are caused by a trauma of some kind like babies used to be born with the cords around their necks. Occasionally it happens now and if they don't catch that quickly enough it can cause anorexia [Transcriber's Note: Dr. Lawrence may mean Asphyxia or Hypoxia] or not enough oxygen to the brain and that leads to brain cells dying and if it is severe can be result in mental retardation. There is another condition called phenylketonuria, PKU, that they test for now, and they can administer appropriate medications and prevent that completely or diet I think is actually how it is actually prevented. That is mental retardation. Mental illness, you are probably familiar with some terms like schizophrenia, manic depression, bipolar disorder, and many, many, more...paranoia. It is more of a...it is not a condition...it is a, well it is a condition, but it is an illness. It is how most people think of it.

JG: It is treatable and maybe even curable?

WL: To some extent yes, to some extent. Some are treatable. For instance manic depression, or bipolar disorder, as the name implies as your moods go up and down, huge mood swings, high energy, low energy levels etc. We all have that to some extent, don't get me wrong but these are extremes where a person has so much energy they can't sleep for weeks upon weeks, you know, they are just wired. Obsessive compulsive disorder is another. Those are typically treated by either a psychiatrist or a psychologist or a counselor or something of that nature. Sometimes medication is involved, sometimes it is not. That is a good question and leads right into that resistance issue that I was about to bring forth. Of that \$600,000 budget, roughly half and half – MH and MR, and there was one psychiatrist in town at the time, and he had previously had a contract with the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to help deliver psychiatric services to needy people in this area. I'm not going to name his name. If you want to go back and research, it is in all the newspaper clippings because it was headline news back then. This

particular person, I should say he was not board certified as a psychiatrist he was board eligible. That is an important distinction in the field. But anyway, he presented to the board that he wanted to have the entire mental health section of the budget for himself personally and then he would deliver the services to needy people throughout the 13 counties. And he got the local medical society to back him with that proposal. So the proposal carried a lot of weight and the newspaper was all over this.

JG: How big would the local medical society be just Angelina County or outside?

WL: This was Angelina County.

JG: Just Angelina County.

WL: We didn't get this kind of resistance anywhere else.

JG: Okay. But being the biggest town I guess, with the biggest newspaper and all that.

WL: Right and the most number of physicians. It was a major, major issue and it was very difficult to deal with.

JG: Do you mind me interrupting?

WL: Please.

JG: Specifically with that issue, but then also kind of in general, your relationship with Mr. Burke, issues like that that would have been maybe as you said caused you to lose sleep at night, is that something that Mr. Burke came to you about? Did you go to him about or not at all? I'm just curious about the relationship you might have had or was it all just, only at meetings? I mean did y'all ever have discussions?

WL: No, no it was not only at meetings. We had discussions and Mr. Burke and really the whole board was very involved in that issue because it was...

JG: Officially and unofficially.

WL: Yes, it was one of the most serious issues facing the center and keep in mind we were brand new. In that sense we were very vulnerable and really didn't have all that much credibility in the community at that time. We were new and here we are fighting with the doctors you know. Why are you fighting with the doctors?

JG: And the public sees it as tax money, local money.

WL: That is right no matter what you say about it being locally controlled, most people tend to...like Horace Cardwell once told me he said, "Lawrence if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck it's a duck." That was his comment about whether we were a government organization or not. But we still worked well with him.

JG: So it caused you to lose some sleep.

WL: It did!

JG: How was it ever resolved?

WL: Well we put it on the agenda as we should have and this particular psychiatrist came to the meeting and he made his presentation and the board very politely listened to him and had dialogue with him and then after he finished his presentation they very politely declined his offer and voted accordingly. They said no we do not want to turn all this money over to you. I didn't have to say anything in that meeting. I had written the motion, you know, and I knew, I felt like I knew how they were likely to vote because I had private conversations with them.

JG: So going back to the way Mr. Burke wanted you to do things, so did you have to write a motion that they accept that?

WL: Or reject it.

JG: So your motion was to consider it?

WL: Was to reject it.

JG: Oh, okay so you had to write one, I see what you're saying. So your motion...

WL: No, he didn't want any surprises. If you say consider this.

JG: So your motion was to reject it.

WL: To not accept it and to implement the services ourselves.

JG: So the vote was yes reject, or no not reject.

WL: Well you just read the motion and if the motion says we do not accept the offer of the Angelina County Medical Society, then you vote yeah or nah on that motion and that is it. And they voted to approve that motion that we decline it.

JG: So, was that motion already in the agenda?

WL: Yes.

JG: Okay, was that agenda made public before the meeting?

WL: Oh yes, we followed the Open Meetings law.

JG: So the person that was making the presentation knew that was going to be the motion?

WL: No, no, they didn't get the motion they got the agenda. The agenda would have said something like consider, consider the offer from the Medical Society. I don't remember the exact wording. The agenda items were always either consider or discuss or something of that nature.

JG: Yes, and that is where I'm coming from I guess, because I've been on lots of boards too and I'm very aware of the Public Meetings Act and all that so I was just curious about your verbiage. What verbs did you use?

WL: Well the verbiage was much more direct than the supporting document which contained the motion.

JG: So it wasn't on the public agenda that was the motion?

WL: No, that information went to the board. And let me explain that process a little bit and this is another thing Mr. Burke and I established. I mentioned earlier that we had three committees. We had a budget and finance committee. We had a program committee. And we had a personnel and public educations committee. Each one of those had a chair and two members. Then we also had the chair and officers of the board itself, but these committees had a good deal of latitude and like... on every month when I had the supporting documents prepared, I took the committee section, like budget and finance, and when it was ready for Mr. Woods, who was the chair of that committee as treasurer of our board, I would call him and I would say, "Mr. Woods can we have lunch this week?" He would say, "Sure" and we would set it up and I would drive over to Lovelady, he was president of the bank there, and we would usually drive on into Crockett and have lunch and I would go over all the items in that section and make sure he understood them, he accepted them, he approved of them and if he didn't, then I modified them. Sometimes other members of that committee would come and participate in those, but usually not, usually it was just the chair. Then I did that with each of the three committee heads and after I had done that, I could come back and have my secretary finalize all the supporting documents as a result of those meetings. Then those packets were mailed out to the board, usually at least a week ahead of time. So, if you follow that cycle you finish a board meeting well it's about time to get ready to start mailing the next set.

JG: Because you met every month.

WL: Every month, absolutely, every month.

JG: Typewriters and snail mail, which used to be faster than it is now.

WL: No email, no word processors.

JG: No cell phones.

WL: No cell phones had to call on the old land line and play phone tag.

JG: But you had your monthly meetings and you had all the preparatory work in between.

WL: And you know, if you've been on boards you know enough, after you've done this for a few months then people kind of get into the routine and like the chairs of the respected committees would know okay well this is the week Wayne's going to call me so we can have lunch. It worked really, really well.

JG: When it becomes more about where you're going to eat, rather than what you're talking about then you know everything is well, huh?

WL: (laughter) Well, I wouldn't go quite that far. It was important where we chose to eat and obviously I left that up to the board member. But, you know, that was another example of me being in all these counties many, many times because usually when I would do that, I knew I was going to be going I would also arrange to meet with the county judge either before or after lunch or meet with...

JG: So you did a lot of traveling.

WL: A lot of traveling.

JG: Thirteen counties, thirteen commissioner's courts, thirteen judges, nine board members, committees...

WL: Yes, all of it.

JG: You were just going from one to another.

WL: And initially it was me, you know, and after we started getting some staff they could take some of that responsibility, but yes once I...

JG: And all those advisory committees you set up.

WL: Yes, all those initially I had to be at, and again once we got the staff in Hardin County, well then that person would become their main contact. I would still go periodically, but I didn't have to go every month. But then you know, to me that was just essential in terms of establishing the network of supporters. I didn't feel like I had the luxury of working more or less as a CEO from an office. I didn't think that would work in East Texas, at least not initially. It may now, I don't know, because the support is there, after 42 years it is there, so it's probably not necessary, for instance for Susan to go and sit down with all these county judges very often. But yes, initially I was on the road a

lot and I apologized to both my daughters for having to miss some of their school activities, PTA meetings, because I had a lot of night meetings. A lot of night meetings.

JG: Trying to accommodate their schedules, the schedules that they needed.

WL: I had to, in my opinion, I had to.

JG: You mentioned three committees, what were those three committees at the time? Finance was one.

WL: Budget and finance, program, and personnel and public education.

JG: Okay.

WL: They still have committees, still function the same way.

JG: Same three or more committees?

WL: I think the same three, they may have a little different title, but I know they have a budget committee.

JG: Everything tries to funnel into one of those.

WL: Right, and I noticed in listening at this last Burke meeting I attended, that the chair, and this is something I hadn't heard before but the chair whose Colonel Howard Daniels from Polk County, excellent chair, if an item came out of a committee on the agenda, if it came with the recommendation of a committee, he said that. He said in his information to the board, he said, "This is a board committee item as recommended. It requires no second I call for the vote." So I presume he is basing that on some section of Roberts Rules of Order that allows for a certain type of motion coming out of a committee. I have got to research that a little bit. I'm curious about that.

JG: So no discussion even?

WL: Well no you could have discussion, you just didn't need a second.

JG: Oh okay.

WL: I said that wrong he did ask for discussion, but if there were no discussion, he went straight to the vote.

JG: Basically just eliminated a second, since it came from a committee, which would have had to go through its approval process.

WL: A motion... And so anyway there were a lot of night meetings and when I left MHMR, jumping into the future for just a minute, I told my wife I said, "I'm not going to

any night meetings for at least a year. I don't care what they are," and I didn't. I said, "I can't do it anymore." I was just burned out. And I should say that I, probably looking back on it, I should have paced myself better, but I felt like strategically we had to work fast and hard initially to get the services out there. But over the course of that almost ten years I literally burned out and I told the board that when I told them I was planning on leaving. I said, "I'm burned out." I said, "I should have paced myself better," because I loved working there. I loved working for them, they were wonderful. I said, "But being burned out I'm going to make mistakes that I don't want to make and you wouldn't want me to make." And I said, "I'm going to give you my notice here in the next sixty days or so." They didn't want me to leave but they went on and recognized that I needed to. They gave me a six month consulting contract to work with McDermott if he needed it. They kept me on retainer for six months. They were kind enough to do that.

JG: And you wanted to pursue private work?

WL: Yes, private practice. I did that for 18 years.

JG: In Lufkin or did you travel? How far did you go?

WL: No just Lufkin.

JG: Okay.

WL: I did, I don't know if we are ready to leave the Center part of this and get into that, but I did individual, marriage counseling, family counseling, but I also did an awfully lot of management consultation.

JG: So not necessarily mental health-mental retardation, just any type of counseling?

WL: It was roughly half and half.

JG: Half and half, okay.

WL: I would say half of it was mental health issues, not so much mental retardation, mental health issues and the other half management consulting, because at that time as you know, we had four or five very large industries and I think I did consulting work for every one of them. More for Temple Inland, than I did for any of the others, and the Temple Foundation. I did a good bit for them and Memorial Hospital. I did a lot of work for them. Anyway, my contacts from my days at the MHMR Center, I made a lot of contacts with the industry people there and that helped me when I went into private practice. I could pick the phone up and call them, and they knew who I was, so we had a relationship there. That was very helpful in helping my practice grow. So...

JG: You were talking about the budget and how the state... how there has been changes to funding.

WL: Yes.

JG: I didn't want to totally leave that and I don't quite know what question to ask but...

WL: Well I think I know kind of where you may be going.

JG: Just some changes I guess and...especially compared to those formative years.

WL: There has been a real... yes it's night and day, the change that has taken place. And I don't mean my comments to sound or be partisan, but I guess in some ways they are. Back then, Texas was a very, for a southern state, was a very progressive southern state. It wasn't like Mississippi or Alabama, or any of those states. And in the area of mental health and mental retardation we were among the leaders really; and it was exciting in that regard. For instance as we talked about before roughly almost 80 percent of our initial funding at the Center came from state grant and aid and that continued over the early years of the Center because the state was very, the legislature was very, and the governor were very supportive of public services in general. Education, mental health, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, you name it they were all... they didn't have adequate funding, by any means but they had a lot of money and it was used well. But that has changed with... call it what you want... anti-taxation movement. Texas has gone from being a progressive southern state to being much like all the other southern states. It has flipped and we don't spend hardly any money now, state money, on mental health and mental retardation. Most of that is Medicare, Medicaid money. I don't know what the percent of the Burke budget is state funds, but I would predict that it is very small as compared to ours roughly 80 percent.

JG: The change though happened after you left?

WL: Yes.

JG: There was no trend in the 9 or 10 years you were there?

WL: No.

JG: Pretty much 80 percent throughout.

WL: It became more from federal.

JG: More from federal, okay.

WL: Because initially it was mostly state. The state didn't drop, in fact the state funding steadily increased every year, but we got federal money in as well.

JG: But meanwhile, your need your need for income was outpacing everything so federal made up the difference.

WL: Federal helped, yes and then the counties continued to provide.

JG: Was that always, regardless of federal and state and your time was the counties' responsibility pretty much considered to be 20 percent?

WL: Yes.

JG: So that stayed a constant twenty percent and then the rest was made up between state and federal.

WL: Yes, it only had to be 20 percent of the state funding. It didn't have to include the federal.

JG: Oh it didn't have to include the federal.

WL: So when the budget went up significantly because of a federal grant, the counties' appropriations or allocation didn't go up accordingly.

JG: Was the federal pretty much a done deal, was it really counted on, or were there any real obstacles from grant to grant for the federal money?

WL: We did count on it and it was, generally speaking, pretty reliable but we would have to apply for it.

JG: Right, it wasn't expected, but very much hoped for?

WL: No, and there was another arena for our opposition to come out against us, because at the time, any federal grant that you wrote and were going to apply for had to be considered by different committees of the DETCOG. And at one point they called them RSA's and I can't remember exactly what that even stood...Regional something...and they had the authority to disallow it because...

JG: What was the federal department that the grant was made to?

WL: Well our building was HEW [Health, Education, and Welfare] and we had several other HEW grants.

JG: Health, Education, and Welfare.

WL: Right. And there was some alcohol and drug abuse funding.

JG: So it was a grant to each one you had to write applications for?

WL: Well those were usually joined together, alcohol and drug were usually one grant and HEW would be another grant.

JG: Were there any kind of regional oversight of those? For instance, I mean did just the Feds decide for all the different ones in Texas and all the different ones in all the other states? I mean was it state-wide review boards?

WL: The RSA's or DETCOG had to approve it before it could...

JG: Okay so DETCOG that is what I was wondering.

WL: That was a regional oversight, and then the federal government looked to them to coordinate and hopefully eliminate any duplication. When we would go to meetings, and usually it would be me and one or two board members if it was a significant grant. And I remember one that Mr. Burke and Mr. Woods both went and I went, the three of us did, and I believe it was maybe in Jasper and this particular psychiatrist was there and spoke vehemently against our grant application and they overrode him also and voted to authorize it and approve it. Really after that, his resistance kind of started tapering off. It wasn't quite as vociferous. I think he realized by then he was pretty much beaten. That is another person I need to say a thank you to. A good friend of mine who is a retired radiologist, Dr. Bill Kistler, a member of the medical community here obviously, agreed to be on one of our local advisory groups. And that was much to the chagrin of the local psychiatrist and he had several conversations with Dr. Kistler about that over the years. So anyway, I want to thank Bill Kistler for assisting as well. But anyway, did I answer your question about the funding?

JG: Yes sir, yes sir.

WL: The funding was always an interesting process, because at some point...Initially it was simple, but as true with most organizations I'm sure, as you grow and age your funding becomes a little more complex and ours certainly did. And I think it is, obviously the Burke budget is now roughly I think \$34 million dollars a year, and keep in mind we started out at \$600,000. So they have a very complicated budgetary process. A lot of theirs is based I understand on reimbursement for services rendered, Medicare and Medicaid etc. We didn't have any of that.

JG: I was just trying to think, I think I've asked all the very specific questions that I had. Is there anything that I have neglected to ask? And like I said we don't have to necessarily get it all in one interview, but I think we covered good ground.

WL: I guess I should say that some of this effort that we are involved in today grew out of a history project that you are involved in and helping with and that is the history of Deep East Texas MHMR and Burke and I guess I ought to just make a quick comment about that. I went to Susan Rushing here...

JG: Now we are still on tape you know that right?

WL: Right, is that okay?

JG: Oh it is fine with me. I didn't know where you were...

WL: I went to her a year or so ago and told her that since she and I...I had been there since the beginning and she almost since the beginning, that between the two of us plus interviewing a lot of other people, we could pretty well write the history of that organization. And I told her, I said at the time, I said, "Susan I'm 71 years old and I could have a stroke or something worse and if that happens then my part of it is essentially gone except for the news clippings." And I recommended that we embark on a project to write the history and she agreed. That has snowballed from there, and it is my meeting with you and trying to get them to gift, them being Burke, to gift some of their older records to The History Center here. And incidentally the Burke board is meeting today and they will discuss that issue. (**JG:** okay) Jim McReynolds, I saw him yesterday at a funeral, and he told me that they were going to bring it up for discussion today. But anyway, that project is in its infancy, but is I think a worthy project. And I want to just say that it all began, this whole movement, began in Ward and Annabelle Burke and their family with the birth of their third daughter Betsy and she was born in 1950. And she is a Down syndrome person, is still alive and living in a facility operated by Burke. And that is to their credit, because they had the vision to realize that Betsy and people like her would need services of some kind most, if not all their life and Ward and Annabelle, I won't get into all the details today, but they are responsible for what you see in services around us in this part of the state and elsewhere in the state. So...

JG: Well and you mentioned him as being nominated to be the chair of the board of the formation, the formative committee to create it all, yes.

WL: Yes, his leadership has been immense. Well Jonathan, I guess that is probably all I've got to say. I just want to say thank you for letting me have this privilege and honor and it's always a pleasure to talk about Mr. Burke and the Center and my involvement in it because it was a lot of fun.

JG: Well thank you Dr. Lawrence.

END OF INTERVIEW