

Richard A. Wood Jr.

Side 1:

[1/1] He moved to the city when he was 5. His father was with the Forestry Office for the TVA in the Jackson Building.

[1/16] The family lived in Kenilworth, and he attended Newton, David Millard and Lee Edwards.

[1/28] He and Stevens were paper boys together (now done by men from cars) and feels it was a real learning experience. [Jack Stevens]

[1/37] He was cheerleader in junior and senior year - a year behind Ken (see Kenneth Michalove tape) who was head cheerleader. They have been working with the city - almost as long as Norma (see Pat and Norma Price tape). [Kenneth Michalove, Norma Price]

[1/56] He was mayor from 1972-1975. Ken was municipal coordinator (a job created for him) to work with the city and county.

[1/67] It was a shock to the Democrats when, in 1969, Republicans were elected (see Keleher and Atkinson tapes - Keleher was the first woman on the council - [Ruben Dailey the first black]). [Wayne Montgomery, Barbara Keleher, Luke Atkinson, General Webster Anderson]

[1/75] It was the handling of the Civic Center that led to their not being reelected. Montgomery, then mayor (1969) gave a speech to Rotary Club a week before the election but lost by 73 votes. [Wayne Montgomery]

[1/89] When he came into office the work on the Civic Center had stopped. Coggins offered a site in the Westgate shopping area, which was rejected because of Urban Renewal funds restriction (had to be within a mile of the Court House). City bought Heart of Asheville Motel and expanded auditorium. [George Coggins]

[1/105] The public was divided [from Ralph Morris I learned that there are still people not talking to each other because of this - see his tape.] He launched an aggressive campaign to explain what the center would and could do - it was referred to as the "rock pile at the end of Haywood Street."

[1/132] Graham, a close friend of Gene's (mayor in 1975) asked what he could do to help and offered to hold a crusade in the center when built. Terrell wrote a column (see Bob Terrell tape and enclosure). [Eugene Ochsenreiter, Billy Graham, Bob Terrell]

[1/150] The assistant manager is referred to as "Mr. Bricks and Mortar," and knows more about the airport and the Civic Center than anyone. The maintenance building on South Charlotte was built without bond money but from funds budgeted by council over 5-6 years, and is dedicated to him (see snap shot). [William Wolcott]

[1/190] High Point and Asheville were the only cities in North Carolina to receive what amounted to 5 million a year discretionary money to upgrade the lower income areas. The community centers in Montford and East Riverside were built in large part with Model City money.

[1/206] A consolidated health program, in cooperation with the public health department, opened in the First Baptist Church building and could be a role model for the type of care we may have to get into for low income families in the future. The Opportunity Center on Grove Street, under Parks and Recreation and the Buncombe County Health Department, picked up to fill the needs when the Model City money ran out.

[1/252] In the 60's there was no cooperation between the city and county. He and Greenwood worked out a budget to cover the expenses of the library and airport. This stayed in effect as long as Greenwood was chairman (defeated in 1973). While he was still mayor the new Pack Library was completed and became a county function (1976) and the airport commission was formed (joint city and county participation). The first agreement on the water system was formed. Most counties pay a higher rate for water than city dwellers but because of the Sullivan act (see Price and Morris tapes) there is no difference. [Gordon Greenwood, Curtis Ratcliff, Larry Owens, Roy M. Trantham]

[1/307] Up to 1978 liquor could not be bought by the drink - hotels and restaurants felt they were losing conventions and tourists because of this. Campaigning for "drinks by the glass" was tough. A mayor's committee, consisting of all living mayors, was formed and talked to groups. [Earl W. Eller]

[1/343] On the way to a luncheon at the S&W (then in the Asheville Mall) to talk to the Baptist Ministers Association he asked Gene, "What do you think we will have for lunch today?" The answer was, "I'm afraid its going to be us." Bill (vice mayor) was opposed to it as he was active in Baptist affairs but it passed - a tremendous boost for the city financially. Grove Park Inn would never have been able to expand. There probably was less drinking because of this for, when people brought a brown bag bottle they usually finished it. [Eugene C. Ochsenreiter, Bill B. Horton]

Side 2:

[2/2] It was Bob Hope's hobby to open centers and he did 4 or 5 a year. The house was packed. Billy put on a crusade later (enclosure). Ringling Circus successful but may lose to Greenville, SC if they build a center. We have lost the Southern Conference in basketball because it outgrew the space. There is talk of possible expansion. The facility has held up well. [Bob Hope, Billy Graham]

[2/44] Model Cities program, Civic Center and cooperation between the city and county were the achievements of his time. He feels fortunate in having a council that worked well together. He never had any doubt that each person did what he thought best for the city and not for himself - he doesn't feel that comfortable about some of the present members [see enclosures re: recall].

[Henry Colton, Eugene C. Ochsenreiter, Ralph D. Morris Jr., James W. "Red" Hoyle, Calvin Marshall, Ruben J. Dailey, Bill B. Horton]

[2/63] People still call him the "baby mayor." On the street a lady blocked him, "Don't I know you," to which he answered, "I'm your new mayor," and before she proceeded with her walker she said, "I wondered why I wasn't sleeping well at night - and now I know." The Drhumor building is being remodeled and his office will be there.