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SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

RELEASE FORM

I, DONALD R. MIDDLETON, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history project.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS project is to collect audio taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

I understand that the SCAHS plans to retain the products of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication and presentations for the promotion of the Historical Society and its activities in any medium.

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**ACCEPTED AND AGREED**

Signature [Handwritten Signature] Date 7/27/08

Printed Name DONALD R. MIDDLETON

Address 15133 W. CARBINE

City SUN CITY WEST State AZ ZIP 85375

Telephone 623 546 2744

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Don Middleton  
Attorney for Del Webb Corp

Interviewer: Beverly Brown 27 July 2008  
Transcribed by Belva McIntosh

Today is July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008. I am Beverly Brown from the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. I am interviewing Don Middleton.

**BROWN:** Don, could you tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got involved in the Del Webb Corporation.

**MIDDLETON:** As she said I am Don Middleton. I am originally a Virginian, now living in Sun City West, retired, I am an attorney. I was 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> generation Virginian when I left there to come to the southwest. I had spent a couple of years in the southwest and when an opportunity came to move out here I was really ready to come. I answered an ad in the newspaper, not knowing where it was located and it turned out to be an ad for the legal department of the Del Webb Corporation. I came out and got interviewed and accepted the job, went back to Virginia and told my wife and moved real shortly thereafter. This was 1963. I lived here for twenty five years and then moved to Vegas and spent ten years there and I have now been retired for eleven years back here in Arizona. I worked 18 of those 25 years with Del Webb Corp. in their legal department. I then worked for a couple of more corporations before I got a job up in Las Vegas as general counselor for a developer up there. Went up there and finally retired. All my children and all my grandchildren lived here so we moved back to Arizona.

**BROWN:** So did you meet Del Web?

**MIDDLETON:** Oh, many times yes. My office was only about fifty feet from his. We were on the same floor of the Del Webb building at 3800 North Central. His was right down the hall and he wandered around when he didn't have anything to do. Even if you were having a meeting he might just wander in and sit down.

**BROWN:** Was he good to work for?

**MIDDLETON:** Oh he was a wonderful person. He was a people-person. Very quiet, very nicely mannered and his employees were very, very important to him.

He was also an avid golfer. One thing about him, I was on an airplane coming from Chicago to Phoenix and he got on the same plane and his feet almost touched the floor, he was so excited. He had shot his age on a golf course in Chicago and he was 72 years old. That was one of the highlights of his life for him.

**BROWN:** Did he play golf out here in Sun City? Did he come very often to Sun City?

**MIDDLETON:** Oh yeah, yeah. The main office was down on Central Avenue in Phoenix. He came out here quite frequently, yes. We owned, all across the country, we owned about eighteen golf courses. He insisted that his executives play golf. And if he got the impression that you weren't playing what he considered to be enough golf – I knew a couple of – I didn't have this problem because I played a lot. I had a couple of people I worked with come in and find a dozen golf balls on his desk in the morning when he got there. Del Webb's secretary didn't put them there, he did. That was a hint. One of his philosophies was – as I say Del Webb was a very people oriented person. His philosophy was that weekends were for families. He insisted that we play during the week. I always kept my golf clubs in the car at that time. I never had any trouble to play after I came out here to Sun City. I took over being the attorney for Sun City in 1963.

**BROWN:** Were you involved in the purchase of the land?

**MIDDLETON:** Not for Sun City but for Sun City West.

**BROWN:** Oh, then tell me about what you did in Sun City.

**MIDDLETON:** In Sun City? Well, I did virtually everything. I set up what is now Boswell Hospital. I incorporated that when Del Webb owned it. I set up the corporation and donated my time as an attorney to Boswell Hospital until it got in operation and had money coming in. I told them up front, I won't charge you for my time, but when you start having income you should start paying people who are actually practicing law. I referred a friend to them and he was their attorney for many, many years.

**BROWN:** Were you involved in the recreation centers at all?

**MIDDLETON:** Oh sure. They were part of the Del Webb Corporation. They turned them over to be self operating, but until then, in effect, they were owned by Del Webb. That was part of the sales program.

**BROWN:** So you were involved in all the legal aspects of how it should be set up.

**MIDDLETON:** Yeah. In later years – the initial set up was down before I got here. Sun City started in 1959 with actual construction. The official sales program started January 1, 1960. Of course they had pre-sold a lot of homes, but to make it legal they hadn't taken any deposits. So they gave all these people notice that January 1 you had to come make a deposit if you wanted to keep your contract.

**BROWN:** Was that one reason it was so crowded?

**MIDDLETON:** Oh yes. But it was a real phenomenon for this area. But they didn't make them physically come. They had to send in their checks. I wasn't here that day but I understand it was a mob scene down at what was 107<sup>th</sup> and Grand. It was a big success from the very beginning. I had an uncle and aunt who were early purchasers of Sun City and when I moved to Phoenix my wife stayed back in Virginia for about six weeks to spend time with her parents and her twin sister and brother and so forth. I lived with my uncle in Sun City when I first moved to Phoenix so I found a house down Glendale and moved, but that was in '63.

**BROWN:** So then you transitioned into Sun City West?

**MIDDLETON:** No, matter of fact they weren't really building Sun City West when I left in '81. They were just starting. They were building but it was a very minor part of the overall construction program out here because they were still building in what they called Phase 2 of Sun City which was north of Grand Avenue, past Bell Road. That was the main effort at that time – finishing up Sun City. But they had started Sun City West. It was kind of like what happened with Sun City Grand. They were building Sun City Grand when they were finishing up Sun City West. The part of Sun City West that I live in was not part of it that I was involved in purchasing. It is what is known as the expansion area.

**BROWN:** Who were some of the other men that you worked with?

**MIDDLETON:** Oh, Johnny Meeker, R. H. Johnson, Fred Koontz, Tom Ryan. Oh there were a lot of them. The treasurer's name was Miller, can't remember his

first name. I represented his father in a hit and run accident one time. He came to me and said that his father had been charged with hit and run. His father was 92 years old and had lived in Arizona all his life, had never had a traffic ticket – had never had an accident. He went into vote down in the shopping center at 107<sup>th</sup> and Grand and when he pulled into a parking space he apparently scraped a car and didn't know it. Somebody saw it and took his tag number down and reported him. So he wanted to know if I would represent his father with that ticket and I did and went and talked to him – he admitted it – it had already been taken care of it. The insurance company had paid for it and had the car repaired so we went down to Peoria where the court was and they had to call an attorney out from down town because an attorney had showed up at this court. I told him I just want to plead my client guilty and make a statement. That was the fact that he had gone all these years and never had an accident so we went in and talked to the judge. He knew what was going on. I pleaded him guilty and make a statement about how long he had been driving with out an accident or a traffic ticket and after I had pleaded him guilty they continued the case, which surprised me. They continued the case and at the end of two weeks when we came back of course the witnesses weren't there. The judge dismissed the charges after we had pleaded him guilty. That was the last time I appeared as an independent lawyer in court.

**BROWN:** So these other men you worked with – Boswell and Meeker – were they pretty good to work with too?

**MIDDLETON:** Oh yes. Different personalities. Of course, Jim Boswell was the co-owner of Sun City. He was the county farmer. He owned the land and Del Webb bought the land from him and they set up a corporation. Sun City was owned 51% by Del Webb and 49% by Jim Boswell. But Webb bought the property. All 21 square miles of it from Boswell at I believe \$2100 an acre – no interest. So nearly 20 years later they are still buying this land at the original 2100 dollars with no increase in price. Of course, Jim Boswell is 49% owner. As far as I know Jim is still alive. I saw him at Johnny Meeker's funeral, which would have been about, somewhere around 2000. I sat next to him at the funeral and talked to him. He was still doing some development over in California. His farming here in Arizona was a history thing then.

**BROWN:** Now, was he the father, wasn't there a junior?

**MIDDLETON:** No. The hospital is named after Walter Boswell. That was his uncle. Walter was the original farmer of what is now Sun City. When he died Jim, the nephew, took over. Boswell Boulevard and Boswell were both not named after

Walter. Boswell Boulevard was named after Jim. Boswell Hospital – we named it that even though he didn't ask for it. To give you a little history of Boswell Hospital – Del Webb had – mainly Johnny Meeker – he was the head of the corporation that ran Sun City, had designed this horrible looking – totally inadequate hospital. I think it was either 12 or 16 beds. It looked like a World War I barracks – hideous thing. We set up the corporation and one day at a board meeting Jim Boswell came by and just walked in. He says, I want you to know that you are going to be sorry that you built this. He said, it is totally inadequate now and it isn't even started. He says if you will go back to the drawing board and prepare something that is adequate and worth looking at I will guarantee the money. I said to Jim what if it is 10 or 12 million dollars. He said that is fine. I think the initial construction turned out to be 12 million dollars. He says I will donate a half million dollars today and you go to the people and see how much you can get in the way of donations from the people. Well, Jim never had to donate another nickel, we got all we needed from the people and others. There was Walton (Wal-Mart's) came and gave a donation. We didn't get it all from the people. So that is the history of Boswell and he didn't put a condition on it to be named after his uncle. That was our decision because he had donated the money. So we gave his uncle's name to the hospital. Jim didn't interfere with the operations of Sun City. He was co-owner but he went about his farming business and he had some development he was doing over in California. His main farming operation was in California at that time even though he had these thousands of acres over here. He lived up in the general area – well he lived in Sacramento, in that area. Another little piece of history – we had a Safeway Food Store at 107<sup>th</sup> and Grand (I don't know what is in there now – there was a furniture store there for a while), but anyway the initial store, in that shopping center where the big radio tower is – in that row of buildings – there was a Safeway Store there and there was nothing else in the area, which is not the way Safeway does business. But Jim Boswell was a member of the board of directors of Safeway and he talked them into doing it on the basis of a 25 year exclusive on the stores in the Sun City area.

**BROWN:** Did that carry over into Sun City West?

**MIDDLETON:** Now that agreement because I think that was already part. But it may have. They were such good partners of ours that we had no problem getting Safeway at lease in Sun City West.

**BROWN:** Did Del Webb Corp. buy out Boswell eventually?

**MIDDLETON:** No. He stayed in until it finished development. He was there when they built the last house. Before that we had already transferred the rec centers over to the independent corporation.

**BROWN:** So when you came to Sun City West, it was the same kind of thing, you worked on the corporation agreements?

**MIDDLETON:** Well, to give you a little history of Sun City West. There was nothing where Sun City West is now except a cattle feeding pen, known as Lizard Acres. Charlie Wetzler owned it. I got a call from Maxine, which was Del Webb's secretary, saying that Mr. Webb needed to see me. So I walked down the hall and I went in there and Johnny Meeker was there, several other people that I don't remember who they were, but I knew them all, from the Sun City area. He had maps all over the big table in his office and he says Don we want to buy this 13,000 acres of land. I want you to go buy it for us, you can pay x number of dollars for it – I won't tell you what it was because I don't remember, per acre average. He said, if you don't get it all I don't want any of it. OK, so I went out there – there were eleven owners – I had title work done on everything. With no trouble I got ten of the eleven owners in escrow, subject to getting Charlie Wetzler, the cattle feeding pen to go into escrow. He agreed to everything, I just couldn't get his signature on a piece of paper. So I took my tie off one day and went out to his cattle feeding pen, standing there with my foot up on his wooden fence talking to him. You just have to know when to push the right button. I said, you know Charlie you would make a good director of this hospital we are building down the road, Boswell. I had his signature in ten minutes. That was the button that needed to be pushed. He signed. I called up Bill Chapman who was the President of the hospital corporation. I said Bill, I wanted to let you know you got a new director. He said Oh, what do you mean? So I told him the story and he said, Don, you can't do that. I said, let me rephrase what I said Bill, I appointed you. You or your successor has a new director, which way do you want it? He says you tell him welcome.

**BROWN:** That's the way Del Webb worked, wasn't it?

**MIDDLETON:** Well, you didn't argue with Mr. Webb. By the time he made up his mind it was well studied. Webb was a very calm person, very dignified, very business-like, but even though I was never invited there, I understand his poker party, his friends, he played poker with a bunch of friends of many, many years, and I understand that their language got a little rough at times. He was a different person playing poker than he was running a business. Del Webb never had any

children, he had two wives, I knew both of his wives. I think his first wife's name was Hazel or something like that. She was a baseball nut. Of course Del Webb was originally a baseball player. He was a minor league professional player. He got an illness, either a bone illness, or muscle or something. In those days back in the 20's they couldn't diagnose things very well. It was like he was dying. His profession was no longer available to him. The only thing he knew was his father was a carpenter, so he bought a hammer and came here to Phoenix and whatever he had wrong with him, the heat here cured him. He was doing carpentry work here at that time. Now in Ed's book, one of the things that I have heard - different stories he had in his book. He was working on an A. J. Bayless market when the contractor got a draw from Bayless and disappeared. He didn't pay his men so they weren't working. Bayless came by and apparently, the way I heard the story, and this is not the way it is in Ed's book, Del Webb had the guts to speak up and said something to the effect - well, if you will pay us, we will finish the store. He says fine, you are my new supervisor, or superintendent of whatever. That is how he got into the management end of being a contractor. He built all of the A. J. Bayless markets - I don't think any of them exist anymore, they got bought out by somebody - for the next 25 years. He really made his money when the World War II came on, doing Government contracting work. Because he had a company there that was doing construction work. His first job was down at Fort Huachuca expanding their health facility for their employees there. He came back finishing the job ahead of schedule and under budget. So he did all the work he could possibly handle during the rest of the war. That is where he really made his money. With himself was an interesting - my parents always told me you never call anybody by their first name unless they tell you to - an older person, so I never called him Del, I called him Mr. Webb. Del Webb didn't like eating alone, so I ate with him sometimes in Vegas, a couple of times in Chicago, when he would be there. If I was there I would go to dinner with him so that the people who lived there could go home to their families. Every place we ever went they knew what he wanted to eat, they knew how to cook it, they knew what he wanted to drink. His drinking is another story. He drank a mineral water I think was called Poland Water, that was all he ever drank. But every place we ever went they knew what he wanted and they would have a supply of Poland water for him. We would walk in - of course we never had any trouble getting in. Just walk in and get the best seat in the house for him. Del Webb had apparently been a heavy drinker early in life. Now I heard another story other than what Ed has in his book. The guy who started what is now Memorial Hospital was a catholic priest. He started the VD clinic and half the church didn't like that. They didn't want to be associated with a VD clinic so they told him he had to close it down but instead he stopped being a priest and kept it open. Emmett McClaughlin was his name. The



expansion into a real hospital was down on a government contract. This was before I was with Del Webb. I got this information from a fairly good source – it was from Emmett himself. I was at a party one night up in Vegas and he was there with Del Webb. Emmett quit the priesthood, got married, and – I don't remember – last time I heard – it was maybe 5 to 8 years ago – Emmett's son was still running Memorial Hospital. Emmett has been dead for years. But he said that when they did the bid work, Del Webb and several other contractors bid on expanding Memorial Hospital – I don't know if it was because of the size of the loan or what it was but you had to go to D.C. for the opening of the bids. They did and Del Webb got the bid. He said at the celebration party – this is Emmett telling me and Del Webb was standing right there – he said –I told Del, and Del was standing there at the party with a glass in his hand – if you are ever going to be anything you have got to stop that – and he pointed to his glass. And as I say Del was standing right there when he was telling me this. He said Mr. Webb looked at his glass and set it on the table and never has had a drink since. And that is not the story that Ed got from somebody else for his book.

**BROWN:** Were you involved when the corporation got involved with building the casinos in Las Vegas?

**MIDDLETON:** Yes. For years I was their attorney also.

**BROWN:** Was it true that the mob was involved? How did that all play out?

**MIDDLETON:** Well, not with us. The mob was involved with the Flamingo and Del Webb built the Flamingo. It wasn't the mob, it was a guy who was in the mob who did it on his own. Basically, Las Vegas at that time was individually owned Casinos. Del Webb was the first one that had a corporate gaming license. Matter of fact, before I got there the legal department of Del Webb drafted the law that was passed by the Nevada legislature permitting corporations to own licenses.

**BROWN:** Doesn't that mean Del Webb operated the casino since he had a license.

**MIDDLETON:** No. That is how we got into it. They permitted a corporation to have a license. He was never personally licensed to run a casino.

**BROWN:** Did that hurt his reputation?

**MIDDLETON:** No. The mafia had been pretty well erased from Vegas. If they were there they were pretty well behind the scenes. You never knew anybody. Everybody knew everybody else. Because I was the attorney for the corporation up there I could walk into any casino, any hotel there – just walk in – get the best seat in the house for a show – get a free meal – everybody knew me and you knew everybody else. It was a small town in those days. It's not the same place now. It is all mega corporations. The Sahara at that time was about the largest casino in town – the largest hotel. But of course there are 4 and 5,000 room hotels there now.

**BROWN:** So he only built the one?

**MIDDLETON:** No, we owned the Thunderbird, the Sahara, the Mint, a little one called Lucky Casino which I sold to the little casino next door and it was taken over by the Golden Nugget later. Then we had one in Tahoe that we built, I think there were two in Reno and then we had one in Atlantic City.

**BROWN:** So was this after the WWII contracts but before Sun City?

**MIDDLETON:** Oh, no this was way after – this was about the time I came in the 60's. L. C. Jacobsen, who was one time the president of Del Webb – as a personal investment he was a part owner, I think it was probably what was then the Sahara Hotel and he got Webb to take over his ownership and buy out the Sahara. He had a little drinking problem. He showed up smashed at a board meeting one morning and Webb fired him on the spot after 25 or 30 years on the job, he wouldn't put up with that. That is when R. H. Johnson took over as president. Actually Del Webb came back for a while as president. Bob Johnson was running the Los Angeles construction office at the time. He moved in to be the president of the corporation.

**BROWN:** What happened to the corporation after Del Webb died?

**MIDDLETON:** He only owned 43% of it. It was on the New York Stock Exchange. It was a separate corporation. It was even until Pulte bought them out a few years ago. It was a New York Stock Exchange stock. I owned quite a bit of it. They were good to their executives. I had two stock options given me. They had profit sharing plan which the Internal Revenue said this isn't the proper plan because apparently Mr. Webb was getting too big percentage of what was being given out, not deliberately. Their analysis of the plan said this is not being done right. They gave us a choice of either taking the money away from Webb, or closing down the plan and leaving it as it is and starting a whole new plan with

proper distributions. Of course they weren't going to take the money away from Del Webb. So I ended up with two profit sharing plans. That is when I finally left them. They were very generous with both the stock options and the profit sharing. But as I say he was already dead when I left. I never can remember – he either died in '74 at the age of 75, or he died in '75 at the age of 74. I think he was 74 when he died so it must have been in '75. I left in 1981.

**BROWN:** Was there retirement for you?

**MIDDLETON:** No. I had the opportunity, I didn't like the person I was working for. We had a new president, we had a guy, I don't even remember his name now who had been president of a company we moved here from Chicago – Greyhound. We built the Greyhound tower right behind the Del Webb building and we moved Greyhound's headquarters from Chicago to here. He was hired to become president of Webb. He had only been there about 3 or 4 months. So I tracked him down when I had an offer to go to another company and I told him that I just wanted to let him know and make sure he understood I wasn't leaving because he came in. So he asked me, he said can we have lunch. He had a lot of questions – he had only been there about three months. I went over a bunch of stuff with him. We had some litigation – a claim against the Government on a navy housing project in Hawaii. I gave him my guess as to what was going to happen and it turned out that four or five months later that is exactly what happened. Even the amount was right. I assured him that we were selling the New Porter Inn over at Newport Beach. No, we were selling Mountain Shadows and I assured him that I would not leave before that went into escrow. I was handling the legal work on it. I got it in escrow at 5:20 in the afternoon and went to work at the other company at eight o'clock the next morning. I have no idea what that guy's name was. I have just drawn a complete blank on him. But we worked together subsequently.

**BROWN:** Do you have any feel for why Pulte bought Del Webb or why Del Webb sold?

**MIDDLETON:** Sure. Pulte bought Del Webb to buy reputation and he is going to screw it up. They are doing a very good job of doing that right now.

**BROWN:** Why did the corporation agree to be bought by Pulte?

**MIDDLETON:** Because they were offered enough money above the stock price that it was worth doing. So as I said, it was a good business decision. They bought the name and the reputation. Del Webb had a good reputation. If you bought a

house from Del Webb and eight years later something went wrong they came and fixed it without question. Pulte has been trying to tell people they have a one year warranty which they don't. They have a two year warranty by code. If you are two years and three days over they won't do your work. They won't do the repair work. That was Webb's reputation. He had a good reputation and as I say he was people oriented. Pulte was buying that reputation.

**BROWN:** Did Del Webb talk to the residents of Sun City?

**MIDDLETON:** Oh yeah. Not on an on-going basis, but he had people and that was their job to do that. But he would go to things like – I think he was probably at the opening of Boswell Hospital. I don't know, I am not sure about that. We did a lot of things in the community but we had people who did them. The Sahara Hotel sponsored the professional golf tournament in Vegas. Remind me to tell you about his no smoking sign. I would go up, being the attorney for the casinos, for the pro-am day (I didn't play) and the party that night and so forth. He was always there for that sort of thing. But Bob Johnson and all the executives of the company – the top executives were up there. Bob Johnson walked over to me looking in the other direction and said, you ready to eat. He wasn't looking at me when he talked and I said yes and he said I'll meet you downstairs. So I went downstairs and we went to the show room and we got a table with Bob and myself and Maxine who was Del Webb's secretary. We ordered dinner and the maitre de comes over and he hits me with his elbow and he said are you expecting Mr. Webb and I said hell no. He said, well you got him. And there he was about five paces behind him and he just comes and sits down. Didn't ask can I sit with you guys. Just came and sat down and had dinner. Before it was the thing to do he had a big brass no smoking sign on his desk. He also had a big container outside the office where people laid their cigarettes when they were going in there. I was with somebody from one of the offices up in Vegas one night at the Sahara having dinner and Del Webb came in – same thing – sat with us. He looked at me and said – you smoke a pipe don't you. I said yes and he said well go ahead. I said Mr. Webb I didn't think you liked smoking. He said I hate the smell of cigars and cigarettes but I love the smell of a pipe. So I lit up. I would walk into his office if he called and was having a meeting or something. They thought I was a lunatic. I would walk in their smoking my pipe. But I knew something they didn't. He was joy to work with. When he sold the Yankees – he and Topping sold the Yankees, his attorney, Judge Milliken out of L.A. – this was prior to the days of fax machines and computers where you can send documents back and forth. Judge Milliken had looked at all the quote documents. When they were getting ready to sell the last eleven percent and Mr. Webb had all these documents – copies of them – with Judge Milliken's

OK on them. He went through and he would sign a document and there were four that he hadn't seen. Webb knew that I was in town negotiating with some people about a loan so he called me and wanted to know if I could come over and look at these four documents for him and give Judge Milliken a call. Which I did, which I wasn't supposed to, because this was a personal investment and I was corporate attorney. I went over and it was just trash. The reason the Judge hadn't seen them was that they weren't worth anything anyway. They were nothing. So I reviewed them and gave his attorney a call. So I was involved in his sale of the last part of the Yankees. We had a situation where they prohibited

**(End of side A)**

**(Start of side B)**

Two of us were over in L.A. getting ready to fly to Phoenix when Mr. Webb walked up. He was coming on the same flight. He said – Good, I am glad you two are here – I need to talk to you about something. I said well you are going to have to come back to coach because we aren't allowed to fly first class. So he did. We discussed it and he went back to first class and next morning the rule got changed so we could fly first class again. Mr. Webb was a wonderful person to work for. He called me one day, or Maxine called me and said Mr. Webb needs to talk to you. I went into his office and all these people from Vegas were there. He said, sit down, Don, I know you are a married man, I know you have a family so you can tell me no and that is fine. I said, what is the problem. He said we have gotten word from the FBI off the streets of L.A. that we are being robbed at the Sahara Casino cage. He gave me the guy's name and said he has been burned. He says if you don't want to go up there and get involved, let me know. I said no that is fine. So we got a whole bunch of auditors from all over the country, about 30 or 40 of them. I got one of the big two bedroom – 5220 suites is what they called them at the Sahara. All these accountants came up there to my room. I had a meeting with the local attorney and the gaming control board at 11:30 at night, Sunday night. Two of the members of the board came in their pajamas and bath robes. We got permission to take over the Sahara, the Thunderbird and the Mint and audit them that night – Sunday night. I had two sheriff's Sergeants in plain clothes armed within ten feet of me for eight straight days. They searched my room if I was going to go to bed and they had the room across the hall – one of them was looking out all night long. Well it turned out that the guy hadn't been burned, he committed suicide, he was the one that was stealing the money. I did not leave the Sahara Hotel for eight straight days. Not even to go out to get a breath of air. We were able to track down – if you don't think the Casino's have power – we got the

largest bank in Las Vegas opened up at midnight – Sunday night – to audit our accounts. We found over 800,000 dollars of money missing. We got back better than 750,000 of it because we knew who it went to. This guy knew he had been caught because we sent a man up from down Tahoe, who worked in the cage and when he showed up this guy knew he had been caught and he killed himself by drinking formaldehyde. The FBI called the pharmacist and asked them, is formaldehyde a poison and the pharmacist said no. Well, it isn't. He didn't ask him the next logical question, will it kill you. Yes, it will kill you. Your throat swells up and it chokes you to death. So because it wasn't a poison they assumed he had been murdered and that was to cover it up. Anyway that was one of the joys of working in the casino business. I don't know what else you would want to know about him. As I said Mr. Webb was a wonderful person, and I enjoyed my eighteen years with the company. They were good to me and it was so diversified. As I say I did work with the contracting ground, the casinos, the hotels, Chris Town Shopping Center – I was involved in the leasing of Chris Town Shopping Center, we owned that and built it. At one time we had a half dozen major shopping centers around the country.

**BROWN:** How did Del Webb decide to build Sun City?

**MIDDLETON:** I am going by what I was told, because I was not here then. It was in the mid 50's. Youngtown was right next door and of course, those of you who know Youngtown, it is a very small retirement community and it sold out in a hurry. Somebody recommended it to him and did a study and he agreed to give it a try. Everybody thought he was a lunatic for trying. Who would want to live in a retirement community – was their attitude. Well the day of opening day, January 1, 1960, he was proven right. They couldn't have had enough sales people to handle the crown that showed up on opening day. Needless to say it has been quite successful. We had the Sun City ----- in Phoenix, that was the parent operation. We had one in Hemet California which was Sun City California and one in south side of Tampa in Florida. It was called Sun City center because there was already a community called Sun City by somebody else down near Miami. Now I understand there are just dozens and dozens of them around the country. I don't even know where they all are. I had some high school classmates, two of them – who live in a Sun City in South Carolina. They have them in Ohio too, and I know there is one in Texas and there are a couple in California. I read an ad the other day that the first Sun City was in California but that is not true. The one in Hemet was there. We stopped building there in the mid 1970's. Sold off the balance of the land to another developer, but we completed the phase we were in. Hemet was close to Riverside.

**BROWN:** What made you decide to come back and live in Sun City?

**MIDDLETON:** Because I knew it. My wife and I were living in Vegas at the time I retired and our children and all of our grandchildren live in the Phoenix area. So we decided we would either stay there – we loved Vegas – and be driving back and forth every month or we would move here and so we moved back here. We would loved to have stayed in Vegas. Most people think that Vegas is just the casinos but it is two cities. You got your casinos and then you got Vegas. We never even went to the Casinos unless we had company coming from out of town. I would frequently tell people I'll get you tickets to a show as long as we don't have to go with you. I did that several times. You can only see the same show so many times. Is there anything else you can think of that you want to ask?

**BROWN:** No. I think you have covered it very well. I want to thank you very much for telling us your story.

**MIDDLETON:** I'll probably think of a dozen things I didn't tell you. I was with them for eighteen years and a lot went on in eighteen years.

**BROWN:** Well, thank you very much.

SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

RELEASE FORM

I, Marjorie E. Johnson, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history project.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS project is to collect audio taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

I understand that the SCAHS plans to retain the products of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication and presentations for the promotion of the Historical Society and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant SCAHS ownership of the physical property delivered to SCAHS and the right to use the property as stated above for scholarly and educational purposes.

I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant SCAHS my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photographs provided by me or taken of me in the course of my participation to be used, published, and copied by SCAHS and its assignees in any medium.

I agree SCAHS may use my name, or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

**ACCEPTED AND AGREED**

Signature Marjorie Johnson Date 6/2/09

Printed Name Marjorie Johnson

Address P.O. Box 3350

City Wickenburg State Az ZIP 85358

Telephone 928-684-0415



SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name Marjorie Erwin Jahson  
First Middle Maiden Name Last

Address P.O. Box 3350 (425 Stegcoach Dr.)

City Wickenburg State Az ZIP 85358

Telephone 928-684-0415 Email -

Place of Birth Champaign Co., Ill Birth Date 11-1-26

Race/Ethnicity (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female X

Are photos included? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No ✓  
If yes, see attached Photograph Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No ✓

Are artifacts included? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No ✓  
If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer BEVERLY BROWN Date 2 June 2009

Address 15933 W. SILVER BREEZE DR

City SURPRISE State AZ ZIP 85374

Telephone 623-584-0440 Email STARFLIGHTERAZ@YAHOO.COM

**SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Marjorie Johnson**

(This interview was conducted by Beverly Brown at the home of Marjorie Johnson.  
The tape was transcribed by Belva McIntosh.)

This is Beverly Brown from the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009  
and I am interviewing Mrs. R. H. Johnson in Wickenburg, Arizona.

**BROWN:** If you could give us your name and tell us a little bit about yourself and  
how you got started with the Webb Corporation.

**JOHNSON:** My name is Marjorie Johnson, Mrs. R. H. Johnson. I came to Arizona  
from Illinois in 1959 and went to work for Webb at the recommendation of a lady in  
another office. I was working for a Real Estate Broker. I think she was in an  
Insurance Office. She said if I ever had to look for a job I should go to Webb. I  
have heard they are one of the best employers there is to work for. And after all  
my years there I agree with her. So I went down to Webb and put in an application  
and they wanted me to start the next day and I said, no, I really should give my  
present boss two weeks notice, even though two of his pay checks had bounced.  
This was a Realtors office in Phoenix and the Webb office, at that time, was at 302  
South 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. They were just building Black Canyon Highway at the time and  
we drove in dust about six inches thick to get to the parking lot. It is now  
Interstate 17. That was in August of 1961 and then we built the Del Webb building  
on Central Avenue just below Indian School and we moved in there in June of 1962  
and remained there until Mr. Johnson retired. At that time R. H. Johnson was a  
Senior Vice President over the construction office in Los Angeles and I worked for  
Jim Miller who was treasurer of the corporation. Mr. Johnson would come over for  
administrative meetings and he was constantly interrupted with the telephone.  
There was an empty office next to mine, Mr. Miller was in the corner office and I  
was in the office outside of his and then there was an empty office. Mr. Johnson  
and Mr. Miller were very close friends. He came through there one day going to Mr.  
Miller's office and I said would you like for me to take those calls for you so you  
don't get constantly interrupted. He was the kind of person who wouldn't ask  
anybody to do anything. He felt like he was from the other office and he was  
intruding. He said, Oh that would be fine. So it developed that he told everybody  
that I was his Phoenix contact. If you need to get hold of me, call her. And  
ultimately he moved into that office next to mine as a visitor office. That was in  
1963. So I became his contact and did the work for him over here in the Phoenix  
Office when he was here. He just commuted back and forth. In 1967 he went in as

President of the Corporation. L. C. Jacobsen had been President prior to that and he left and Mr. Webb appointed Mr. Johnson as President. He still commuted. He lived in Los Angeles and the President's office at this corporate office in Phoenix was in the opposite corner of the building from where Mr. Miller was. Mr. Webb wanted him to go into that office as President. So he talked to Mr. Miller and said, you had her first as your secretary but I want her too, so why don't we all three just move over to that side of the building. So we did. I worked for both of them then, Mr. Miller, the treasurer, and Mr. Johnson. That was in 1967. Mr. Miller and Mr. Johnson went to San Francisco on a routine trip to visit with the bonding company, Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. They were the bonding company for all the construction and everything that the corporation did. They played golf at the Olympic Country Club and as they were leaving and were starting up the steps, Mr. Miller collapsed and he was gone – he died instantly. There were five doctors coming right behind them and they couldn't do anything, they said he was gone instantly. So it was a massive heart attack. So Mr. Johnson came back and he called me and I met him at the airport in Phoenix. We had the sad job then of going by and telling Mrs. Miller that Jim was no longer with us. But somehow she knew. We knocked on the door and when she answered the door she looked at us and said Jimmy's gone. She sensed when she saw us. But I continued working for Mr. Johnson. Let's see, where do I go from here.

**BROWN:** Go back a little bit, were you originally working for Mr. Webb?

**JOHNSON:** No. I didn't work for Mr. Webb at all. Well on occasion when his secretary was gone. Mr. Webb wouldn't eat alone and if his secretary was gone he would wander into my office and ask if I wanted to go to lunch. One day he came in, Mr. Johnson was out of the office, I had taken my lunch and was sitting at the end of his desk, reading the paper and eating my lunch. Mr. Webb came in and said what have you got. I said left over fried chicken, some grapes and some potato chips. I said you are welcome to join me if you would like. So he did. He sat down and ate with me. In many ways he was very common, but very dear, he was great.

**BROWN:** How often was he in the Phoenix office?

**JOHNSON:** Oh, he was there a lot.

**BROWN:** Was that his main office?

**JOHNSON:** Yes. That was corporate headquarters, but he traveled all over the country and every hotel in Denver, I think it was the Brown Palace in Denver and the Waldorf in New York, Kansas City, San Francisco – anyplace that he went he had a permanent hotel room that had a lock-in closet and he never carried a suit

case or a brief case. He just had a key to that closet in every one of his hotel rooms so that he never had to carry anything with him. When he traveled with Mr. Johnson he always had to make sure that Mr. Johnson had plenty of money with him because Mr. Webb never carried any money. He would just walk in and do what he did and walk out and it was up to Mr. Johnson to pay for it. He more than reimbursed him. I remember one time Mr. Webb went down to the Phoenix airport. He was on his way to Las Vegas. It was not unusual for him to just drive his car up and get out and leave it and leave the keys in it and he would go out and get on the airplane and go. The sky caps knew him and were very good to him. They would take his car and park it and when he came back they would find the car for him and bring it in. But one time he got down there, he was going to Las Vegas and he didn't have his ticket with him. He didn't know if he had lost it or what had happened to it. The sky caps took up a collection and bought him a ticket to Las Vegas. Then when he came back he gave the head sky cap the money and said you divide it up however they chipped in to buy that ticket. They knew him and took good care of him. He was just a dear man. One time he - Johnson's office was in the corner and then mine and then Miller's and Mr. Webb's was over in his corner. He cut through Mr. Miller's office and cut through mine then he would go on into Mr. Johnson's office. One day as he came out he stopped and he put his arm around my shoulder and he said, Do you like working here? And I said I sure do Mr. Webb and he said good and he walked on. He chewed Beeman's Pepsin gum and he would come by and wink and drop the wrapper on my desk as he went through there. He was just a real nice person and very concerned with his employees. I got two or three telegrams that he sent me when I was in the hospital for something. He was always concerned. He would call Mr. Johnson and say how is she doing today and so on. He would send me telegrams in the hospital. You know, we miss you - hurry up and get well and get back.

**BROWN:** There was a story about Judge Milliken?

**JOHNSON:** Judge Milliken lived in Los Angeles and he was just as dear a man as Mr. Webb was. He was in his 80's, I am sure. He was on the Corporate Board of Directors. He would come over for the meetings and I would usually pick him up at the airport late afternoon.

**BROWN:** Was he an attorney for Del Webb Corporation?

**JOHNSON:** Yes. He was also Mr. Webb's attorney but he was a judge. He would come over from Los Angeles for the meetings and I would pick him up and usually we would go to dinner and he would be here for the board meeting the next day. He always told everybody we were having a platonic affair, play for me and tonic for him. I was in my 40's than and he was about twice my age. But he was great. He was great to be with - good conversation at dinner. At one of the Director's

meetings – the Director’s room was at the opposite end of the floor and Mr. Johnson called me one day and said would you come down here please. So I went down to the Director’s room and I knocked on the door. When he opened the door he was standing there with Judge Milliken’s trousers. He said can you fix these? I said, I don’t know, what is wrong with them. He said, well the center seam in the back is open and it is kind of exposing the Judge’s bottom. So I looked at them – they turned out to be a black and brown tweed and I lived, at that time, about fifteen minutes from the office. I said can I have them long enough to go home and use the sewing machine. He turned around to Judge and said Judge, can you sit through this meeting without your pants on? He said I don’t mind if you don’t mind. So the Judge sat there in his coat and white shirt and tie and his shorts. I took the pants home. It was apparently a very old suit because it was just threadbare on the back seam, but fortunately there were some seam allowances that were big enough that I could cut them off and lay them on that separation and I used black thread on the bottom and brown thread on the top and used the zig-zag stitch and just put those extra pieces on there. When I got done you couldn’t tell there was anything wrong with them. So I went back and knocked on the door and handed him the judge’s trousers and they continued the meeting. But the Judge didn’t mind at all. It was fine with him.

**BROWN:** I understand that Mr. Webb liked cars.

**JOHNSON:** Oh yeah. At that time – well he always wore a hat, so when he got a new car he always had the drive’s seat – have them take out the padded part of the seat so it would be down as low as it could go because he was tall – he was about 6’3 or 4 so with his hat on he needed the room. Of course no one else could drive the car because they couldn’t reach the pedals. He was rough on cars. If he was in a hurry to get to the airport he would just drive up over the curb and go around. I am surprised he didn’t loose his driver’s license. One time he had a BMW in Los Angeles. Why he ever bought a small car like that they never did figure out, but anyway he took it to the airport one time and he couldn’t remember where he parked it. For the longest time he couldn’t find that car. Mr. Johnson was flying in one day and they landed and he happened to look out as they were coming down to land and he saw this parking lot and he said that is Mr. Webb’s car. So, I don’t know whether he had left the keys in it or how he got the keys but anyway he probably went to the office and sent somebody out to get it. But they retrieved his car after all those months of not knowing where it was or what happened to it. He just depended on everybody else to take care of him and they did.

**BROWN:** Did you get in on any of the philosophy of building a retirement community?

**JOHNSON:** No, I remember Mr. Johnson was in a meeting in Los Angeles with Jim Boswell. He would have been Jim Boswell Jr. and I heard he just died recently. I think his wife died sometime ago. But he was at a meeting with Boswell and I think somebody had already approached Boswell, maybe Jacobsen. But anyway, he and Johnson talked about the land and they had the cotton farms and the grapes and everything and so he told Boswell if he was really interested in a joint venture the next morning to call – Jacobsen was still President – and I think he told him to call Jacobsen and go from there. He was over the Los Angeles office. He didn't have anything to do with the development of Sun City except that he talked to Boswell about this land association. So Boswell called and that started the conversation and the ultimate agreement on the partnership for the land and the development of the Sun Cities. That was John Meeker's baby. To begin with John Meeker was Mr. Webb's caddy and that is how he knew Mr. Webb. Then ultimately Mr. Webb hired him and he was over the Sun City development. I think most of that was John's idea. He had a lot of foresight about the development of retirement communities and the thing that made Sun City so much different was that the infrastructure and the amenities were put in first. It wasn't a situation of the buyer's coming and looking and then saying, well we are going to do a rec center or we are going to do a swimming pool. It was already in when they picked out their house. Owen Childress, who was one of our Webb Foundation Director's sold the first house out there and that is where the Historical Society is right now. I hear it was nine thousand dollars or something like that. But they had so many more people that day that they didn't expect and they didn't have maps or layouts or anything and when they sold the house – whoever it was that bought that first house and they pointed out where they wanted it, so he went to the drug store and bought a sales book and wrote out on there that they wanted a house and it was located at such and such a tree at such and such corner and they got that house but it was pretty primitive the way they started out.

**BROWN:** So Mr. Webb wasn't really involved too much?

**JOHNSON:** Not in the beginning. R. H. always said that Boswell was the perfect partner because as opposed to taking a lease on so many acres of land and having to pay for it up front, they didn't have to pay for it until they used it. So whatever crops Boswell had on it – cotton, grapes or what ever – they paid Boswell for what he lost when they took so many acres of land. But they didn't have to pay for it until they used it so that was a great help as far as the financial situation on Sun City.

**BROWN:** So, did he get involved later then?

**JOHNSON:** Oh, he loved Sun City. He thought it was the pride of his company and said one time, if the original Sun City ever reached a 10,000 population he

would think it was successful. I don't know what he would think now. He would be very proud of it and he was then.

**BROWN:** Did he go to Sun City – there are all the stories that he visited people in Sun City.

**JOHNSON:** He did. His first wife Hazel lived in Sun City. I think they got along better after they were divorced than when they were living together because he used to go out to see her a lot and take her to dinner and they were good friends then. I have a picture of him in Sun City and he was in a convertible and he was talking to a little league player who was standing beside the car talking to him. Of course he owned the Yankees so baseball was his first love. We had two sets of bats from the Yankees. The twenty years that he owned them were their glory years. We had two sets of bats. I think there were either fifteen or sixteen in each set and they were autographed by all the players, like Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, and Casey Stengel was the manager all those years. The bats were from fifteen years worth during the time that he had them that they won either the league pennant or the series. So he was very proud of that baseball team and spent a lot of time with it. Mr. Johnson and I were at Sun City one time when they were dedicating a ball field they had just created and Whitey Ford was there. We sat with Whitey Ford and visited with him. He said the players always liked Mr. Webb as an owner because if they got fined he would give them their money back. He was a soft touch. When you worked at the Webb Corporation at Christmas he gave every employee a month's salary as a bonus for Christmas. One year they changed their accounting principles and took about an eleven million dollar bath and though the powers that be, the committee, said we probably shouldn't give the bonus this year and he said, oh yes, we are, if it weren't for those employees I wouldn't have a company. If I have to borrow the money I will but they are going to get their bonus. We did.

**BROWN:** So you think it was true that he did meet the residents of Sun City?

**JOHNSON:** Oh, I know he did. Some of the board meetings that the corporation had were out at Sun City. I remember one time he started out there and he was driving and he had his speech in his hand and he laid it up on top of the car when he started to get in and then drove off with it on top and it flew off all over the place. Fortunately his secretary had another copy of it so he still had a copy of his speech. Like I said he just depended on everybody else to take care of him and they did. Everybody thought so much of him that they were happy to do it for him. He didn't have to ask him to do anything; they just did for him because they liked him and respected him. In all the years that I worked for Mr. Johnson and married him I never heard him call him anything but Mr. Webb. He always called him Mr.

Webb. I mean it was never Del, he always called him Mr. Webb. Johnson always said he would eat beans to work for Webb.

**BROWN:** So then how did Sun City West get started?

**JOHNSON:** The original Sun City filled up the acreage they had so they just went across the river and started Sun City West. They had Sun City California that for some reason didn't go and Sun City Florida. I think it was the difference in their arrangements and the land, because Boswell was the perfect partner in Arizona.

**BROWN:** Because those two others were going at the same time?

**JOHNSON:** No, I don't know what it was. Boswell didn't own the land in California and Florida. I think that with the Boswell partnership they didn't have to pay for the land until they used it. In the other places they had to buy the land and then start development. It just wasn't financially as positive as this was here.

**BROWN:** Was the Sun City West land also Boswell's?

**JOHNSON:** I think so, but I am not sure about that. You would have to ask Chuck Roach or somebody else that you have interviewed. Everybody else is gone – Meeker is gone. Who was the man – he worked for Boswell – Hank Raymond – he is gone and now Bob is gone. He was the last one left who had that close association with Webb.

**BROWN:** So, Mr. Johnson was manager of Sun City West?

**JOHNSON:** No, he wasn't involved with Sun City West at all. He was President of the Corporation and the Sun Cities were developed by the Del E. Webb Development Company which was an entity of the corporation and John Meeker was the President of that entity and Johnson was the president of the corporation and when Mr. Webb died he became Chairman of the Board and also became President of the Del Webb Foundation. But he was not involved with Sun City West at all. That was Meeker, and Chuck Roach worked for him out there and Owen Childress worked out there. Meeker was the head of all of it. Ultimately Fred Kuntz was out there. Who else – Tom Breen.

**BROWN:** Mr. Jacobsen had retired by then so he wasn't involved at all?

**JOHNSON:** No, he left in '67 – actually I think it was about '65 because Mr. Webb was President and Chairman for a couple of years. Then Johnson went in as President in '67 and then Mr. Webb died in '74, July 4 1974. He was at Mayo's in Rochester and had had some surgery and had an embolism on one lung and it was



unexpected because I remember how shocked the office was when we got word that he had passed away. That was a black day there I can tell you.

**BROWN:** So then the people just carried on?

**JOHNSON:** Oh yeah. They all knew that he would want them to carry on as if he were still there. He married his second wife in about 1960, I think. About the same year that Sun City started. Toni Inz was her name. She was from Los Angeles. Very pretty gal. Nice gal. To my knowledge she is still living, I don't know. Ed Allen said, when I talked to him that he had tried to contact her but ---I remember that Bob - R. H. would call her maybe at Christmas time. He said that she was never very anxious to talk to anybody. I guess she just didn't want to be reminded of the days with Webb or something. I think they were a good pair.

**BROWN:** So then was Mr. Johnson involved in the growth of the Sun Cities?

**JOHNSON:** No. It was all John Meeker. He was still there and whoever his underlings were. Johnson was involved with the corporate office. He wasn't ---

**BROWN:** So he was involved with other construction - military construction projects?

**JOHNSON:** Oh yeah. And all the construction. They built Madison Square Garden in New York and the TWA overall facility in Kansas City and the sports complex in Kansas City. They had an office in Hawaii and they did two or three housing developments in Hawaii.

**BROWN:** So did he travel a lot to these places?

**JOHNSON:** Oh yes. He traveled constantly. He probably traveled 150,000 miles a year.

**BROWN:** Anything else you can tell me about what Mr. Johnson did?

**JOHNSON:** The board forced him to retire in 1981 because then they had a stipulation that at 65 they had to retire. So he did retire from the corporation but he was still President of the Del Webb Foundation and loved it.

**BROWN:** Now what was the Foundation?

**JOHNSON:** I was with him on the Foundation and we made grants in Nevada, Arizona and California; primarily for medical research or medical facilities. Mr. Webb was very health conscious and he insisted on his executives having physicals every year. He set up the foundation and the criteria so it was primarily for health

programs. And after Johnson retired he bought a ranch out here on Castle Hot Springs Road and my then husband was his partner in that ranch. They loved that ranch and they stayed out there and finally they sold the house in California. By this time his wife was in a care center. She had had a hip replaced and it didn't go well, and she had macular degeneration and she just wasn't able to be by herself and she was in Sun Health Care Center for about six years. While he had the ranch he was still driving to Phoenix to the foundation office and he got tired of that so he moved the office up here and I had moved up here in 1985 after I left the corporation. I had a Hallmark Shop and it was just two doors from where he put the foundation office. So I started working for him again. I had a break for those few years when he had the ranch and I was still at Webb but he had retired. So then when I had the Hallmark shop and he had the office two doors away I started working for him again. So in January of 1990 I sold the Hallmark Shop and started working full time for him again. He sold the ranch in '93 and then he sold the house in California in '95 and his wife died in '97 and my husband died in '99. He had never had any problems but had a massive heart attack and was gone. We were still working at the foundation and ultimately decided we might as well get married. I figured I knew him as well as I would ever know him after working for him since 1963. We had a good life together. Unfortunately he passed away last year.

**BROWN:** What was the date?

**JOHNSON:** July 22, 2008. He was a Phoenix native. He was born in Phoenix in 1916. He was 92 when he passed away. He had a good long life and we had a good life together. It doesn't seem possible it has been a year but it will be in July. But even then he still talked about Mr. Webb and how much he thought of him. It was the only job he ever had, working for Mr. Webb since he was 19.

**BROWN:** How did he get the job?

**JOHNSON:** He went to business school in Phoenix and he was at a meeting where Mr. Webb was for the Arizona Building Contractors Association or something like that, and Johnson had taken shorthand and typing in business school. He was sitting there taking notes and he said all of a sudden it was very quiet and he finished out his notes and he looked up and Mr. Webb said, can you read that back to us, what you have been doing? And he did and I guess Mr. Webb was impressed with it and he asked him if he wanted a job with the corporation. So he rode a motorcycle to Flagstaff for his first job. He was a timekeeper on Taylor Hall, which is a dormitory that they still use at NAU. I don't know if you know how Mr. Webb started or not. He was working for a builder who was building a store for A. J. Bayless. Have you been here long enough to remember the Bayless Stores? Well this was A. J. Bayless, the father of the Bayless stores. The contractor, as Webb

always said, went south with the payroll and they asked him if he would like to finish up the store and he did and that is how he got his start as a contractor. Because Bayless markets were all over Maricopa County. That was the start of Mr. Webb's construction life.

**BROWN:** In reading his history it sounds like he surrounded himself with good people.

**JOHNSON:** Yeah. It was just like Meeker who started out as his caddy. Mr. Webb was uncanny in that way. He saw things in people and apparently saw it in Johnson too, because he hired him and that was the only job he ever had. He was 45 or 48 years with Webb. Mr. Webb would call me on weekends and say, Marge, I need to talk to Bob. I would say OK Mr. Webb. I never did tell him, he is at home, call him there, I never did tell him where he was. I just said, OK Mr. Webb I will find him and have him call you. So then I would call Bob. I always knew where he was. He left a schedule with me and I would call him and say Mr. Webb wants to talk to you and he would say, OK I will call him. They always said they were glad they didn't have phones on airplanes because Mr. Webb would have been on them constantly. He liked to talk to his people and always called Bob on weekends.

**BROWN:** So he liked to be involved in the details but he didn't get in their way, right?

**JOHNSON:** Oh no, Well, if he didn't agree with – I know that when Bob's office was in the corner and I was next to him and if he would go over to Mr. Webb's office and they would have a meeting, there were times when he would come back and his face was as red as a beet and I knew he was just ready to explode and it wouldn't be two minutes later until Mr. Webb would come through. He couldn't stand to have anybody be upset with him. He would come in and invariably he would say, well you are right Bob, but I just wanted to know what you thought about it. So he would pick an argument with him just to get him to say what he really thought about something or what he really felt about it. But then he would come back and say, I agree but I just had to find out how you felt about it. I know sometimes Bob was very upset with him but he would never say anything. They had such a good relationship that Bob wouldn't have hurt his feelings for anything. But yes, he would state his case too; when Mr. Webb asked him he would never hesitate to tell him what he thought about things. But because of it they had a very good relationship. I don't know if this is what you want to hear or not.

**BROWN:** Oh exactly. Like I said there are so many rumors. People still respect Del Webb. They still talk about him in Sun City. "Mr. Webb came to my house and asked if everything was OK".

**JOHNSON:** That sounds like Mr. Webb. He would do that.

**BROWN:** Did Mr. Johnson get involved at all when the company was sold to Pulte?

**JOHNSON:** We were already out here in the Foundation. We made a grant to Sun Health Foundation and they built the clinic out here that is there on the corner of--- --. If you didn't come that way you didn't see it. But it was Sun Health Del Webb Clinic and now it is Banner. But it is still the Del Webb Clinic. But we funded that building and at the same time the Webb Foundation, for the first time, had reached the market value of 50 million. I said to Mr. Johnson one day, we had an office in the strip center up there and it wasn't a very nice office, don't you think a 50 million dollar corporation could have a better office, so we made that grant to Sun Health for that building and there was enough land that we had them build an office for us which is right across from the clinic. It has since sold, but we were in that office for -- then they moved the office to Prescott, but we were there for all those years and he loved it, doing that Foundation work. He tried to do it or lead it as he thought Mr. Webb would have wanted it. Even after all those years he was still very loyal to Mr. Webb.

**BROWN:** Did he express any thoughts when it was sold to Pulte?

**JOHNSON:** Oh, he was disappointed but at that point it was past the point of his being able to say anything about it. He was disappointed when Pulte took Webb's name off of it. But then I see they have put it back on.

**BROWN:** I figured they must have bought the name as well as ---

**JOHNSON:** Well, for a while it was Pulte-Del Webb, then they changed it to just Pulte and now they have put the Del Webb name back on it because I think found it meant something, so they put the name back on it.

**BROWN:** I figured that was probably part of the deal to buy the name.

**JOHNSON:** I don't know, have no idea what the deal was. We knew Phil Dion who was President at that time. They just didn't talk about the details of it. But Bob was disappointed but at that point -- that's progress. But there will never be another Del Webb. I am sure corporate life today isn't like it was with him, because he was so concerned with his employees and wanted to make sure that they were well taken care of. When I started in 1961, if you had been there less than ten years you were a short termer because everybody had been there fifteen or twenty years. Once they got there they just stayed. It was comfortable and you just felt like you were an old pair of shoes and you just stayed there. I don't remember ever giving a thought to looking anyplace else for a job after I started there. I

don't ever remember ever getting up and dreading to go to work. That is what I did.

**BROWN:** Was it a large office – corporate headquarters?

**JOHNSON:** Oh yeah, it was in that Del Webb building at 3800 N. Central – it is called City Square now. Somebody else has bought it. It was Rosenzweig Center at the time. The Rosenzweig and Webb did a joint venture on developing that corner and the town house was across the street and the Greyhound building was right behind our building. We were on Central Avenue at Clarendon and Greyhound was right behind us. But the corporate office in that Del Webb building was the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> floors.

**BROWN:** Did they ever do any work overseas?

**JOHNSON:** I think they did a hotel in Malaysia. They built a hotel in Hawaii and ultimately Prudential bought it. But there were a lot of jobs in Hawaii – some housing developments. I don't know if there is a state in the United States where they didn't do something. They built the town of Oakbrook, by Chicago, as a joint venture with Paul Butler, who was Butler Paper Company. They just built this town. Now I understand there is a Sun City just outside Chicago, I don't know what it is called. But they had construction jobs all over. Veterans Hospitals – they built Veterans Hospitals in about seven or eight cities. They built the town of San Manuel, the mining town down in southern Arizona. They built that town and some of the other major ones – well Madison Square Gardens was one of the better known.

**BROWN:** What about Las Vegas?

**JOHNSON:** At one time they owned the Mint, the Thunderbird, the Sahara and then they did Sahara Tahoe, Sahara Reno. The Mint was downtown and the others were out on the strip. Webb was put in the gaming hall of fame in Las Vegas because I think he was the first individual who owned anything in Las Vegas that was clean. It was a haven for the mobsters. One of Bob's early jobs was building the Flamingo Hotel for Bugsy Siegel, Mr. Siegel, I always called him Mr. Siegel. That was the first hotel in Las Vegas and at the time it was clear out on the edge of town. They didn't have plans. Bugsey tried – Mr. Siegel tried to develop this hotel and they would build whatever he asked them to build and he would draw them a picture and show them what he wanted and after they did it then Johnson would go to the architect and they would put it on the plans. They didn't have a beginning plan, like Topsy it just grew. As they did it the architect would put it on the plans. But that was one of his early jobs. Mr. Webb was a real close friend of Howard Hughes. And was one of the few people who could get to Hughes when he

wanted to and Hughes would call him to meet him, but it would be out on a country road outside of Las Vegas. Go so many miles here at two o'clock in the morning, then stop and flash your lights and Hughes would show up then and they would have their meeting out there in the middle of the road someplace. He was so secretive – Hughes, not Mr. Webb. Hughes was so eccentric. Hughes would have his birthday and every year Mr. Webb would have the arts department at the corporation create a birthday card for him. I have a picture of him signing a huge card that said Happy Christmas wishes on your birthday or something like that. They were very close. Then I have some pictures of Mr. Webb at the Yankee games with JFK throwing out the first ball. I think I gave Ed some of those pictures that showed him at Yankee stadium.

**BROWN:** You said you have Mr. Webb's diaries?

**JOHNSON:** Ed Allen has them now and I threatened him with his life if he didn't bring them back.

**BROWN:** But how did Mr. Johnson come to have them?

**JOHNSON:** Well, we fell heir to all of that material when we were with the foundation because it was all at the foundation office. So when we moved out of that office we just – we didn't want it scattered or put in the trash so we brought it all home with us. I have a storage bin out there – I think we have gone through most of them. The pictures are out in the garage that I have sorted out for Ed to have on loan.

**BROWN:** So Mrs. Webb wasn't interested in having any of this?

**JOHNSON:** No. Ed said he sent – I gave him the address that was in Bob's address book and I don't know whether it was right or not. The last I knew she lived in Beverly Hills. But he said he had two letters returned and the third one wasn't returned. I know when Bob called and talked to her – and he did it as a courtesy to Mr. Webb but she didn't appear to have any interest in talking to anybody. As I said she may not have wanted to stir up memories. But she was a nice lady. I'll probably think of things after you have gone but I don't know of anything right now. Do you have any questions?

**BROWN:** No. I appreciate you talking to us. I think this will be a valuable addition to the collection that we have at the Historical Society.

**JOHNSON:** We tried very hard to get Bob to write a book and he started one time. There was a young lady at Sun Health and she came out on two different occasions and would ask him questions. Nobody knew Webb as well as he did or worked with him as long as he did. I don't know many people asked him if he wouldn't write a

book. He just – he lived with the memories and had a great respect for Mr. Webb and I don't know if he just didn't want to make it public or what it was but he was just reluctant to do it. Then as he got older and didn't feel as good – we used to talk just between us a lot and he would talk about the old days and the things that happened. But it was a great life and he liked working for Mr. Webb and as he said he would eat beans to work for Webb.

**BROWN:** That's great. That is a great tribute to Mr. Webb. Thank you very much.

**JOHNSON:** Well, I am glad to do it if it is of any help.

**SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**RELEASE FORM**

I, Helene A. Gumina, am a participant in the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's (hereinafter SCAHS) oral history project.

I understand the purpose of the SCAHS project is to collect audio taped oral histories of the Sun Cities Area original residents, those living in the area and of those who supported the growth of the Sun Cities.

I understand that the SCAHS plans to retain the products of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication and presentations for the promotion of the Historical Society and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant SCAHS ownership of the physical property delivered to SCAHS and the right to use the property as stated above for scholarly and educational purposes.

I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant SCAHS my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photographs provided by me or taken of me in the course of my participation to be used, published, and copied by SCAHS and its assignees in any medium.

I agree SCAHS may use my name, or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release SCAHS, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

**ACCEPTED AND AGREED**

Signature Helene A. Gumina Date 5-10-10

Printed Name HELENE A. GUMINA

Address 10403 PONDEROSA CIRCLE

City SUN CITY State AZ ZIP 85373

Telephone 623-933-3705



SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM

Please Print Clearly

Name Helene A Kuminia  
First Middle Maiden Name Last

Address 10403 - Ponderosa Cc

City Sun City State Ariz. ZIP 85373

Telephone 623-933-3705 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth Milwaukee Wis Birth Date July 6 - 1913

Race/Ethnicity (optional) WHITE Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female X

Are photos included? Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, see attached Photograph Log.

Are manuscripts included? Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_

Are artifacts included? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X  
If yes, see attached Inventory Log.

Interviewer BEVERLY J. BROWN Date 10 MAY 2010

Address 15933 W. SILVER BREEZE DR.

City SURPRISE State AZ ZIP 85374

Telephone 623-584-0440 Email STARFLIGHTERAZ@YAHOO.COM

## SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Helene A. Gumina

This is Beverly Brown for the Sun Cities Historical Society. Today is the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2010 and I am interviewing Helene A. Gumina at her home at 10403 Ponderosa Circle, Sun City, Arizona.

**BROWN:** Helene, could you tell us a little about yourself and how you got to Sun City.

**GUMINA:** Well, I'll tell you. I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and after sixteen years I was a gymnast. From my sixteenth year – I never tell about my early life because I don't remember it. I have been here too long. Anyway at sixteen years of age, I was a gymnast until my late thirties. I was a dancer with a dance group – folk dancing and Viennese Waltz. I applied for a job in 1960 in an investment company. I stayed for six years then I married the boss. Lived ten years in Brookfield and then my husband had open heart surgery and was told to move to a warmer climate. Moved to Sun City in 1976. My husband had a client here who had been a violin teacher in a high school in Milwaukee. So when we arrived in Sun City – well he got us involved in all these organizations right off the bat. There were ten of them at that time. So we were involved in all of that. My husband put me on a pedestal and I don't want to get off. That is why I am continuing his philanthropy work or – No that's all – I better go on. Moving to Sun City my church kept me busy so I loved my church – although I went to church my whole life I never read a bible – never read a bible. So the first time we came to church everybody is carrying a bible and my husband said to the Pastor, where did you get a bible? He says how would you like for my wife and I to come over to talk to you – go through the Bible and I said well nobody ever said that to me before. I think that is wonderful. So they came over here and on this kitchen table we accepted the Lord as our Savior and six months later we were both baptized and then a year and a half later my husband died. So I wasn't really sad because I knew where he was and where he went but he wasn't that well and I expected it you know. So I wasn't sad. I just kept on going because I was busy – I always had something to do. So that is how I kept on with all my work. So anyway this client of Ted's that was the school teacher and he was assistant concert master at the symphony so he was the one that got me involved in all of this here – all of the arts that there was to know. Then he joined the Lions and he was quite

involved in the Lions and I was a Lioness for so many years and it is only the later years now that I joined the Lions, caused the Lioness quit you know – and I was president for three years and I enjoyed my time with the Lions too.

**BROWN:** So what kind of things did you do in the Lions?

**GUMINA:** With the Lions? Well they are for the blind. You don't know that? Oh my goodness! They do so much for the blind. And for the leader dogs, you know, and this and that. And our club is quite active, so I enjoyed all of my time and we had speakers every month. We met once a month for the Lionesses but for the Lions we met twice a month. So I enjoyed all my time there too. So then, let's see, Ted got in the symphony and then the chamber music. I have been with them right from the beginning – 34 years. I am ushering for 34 years. My husband and I worked together on that and I did a concert every year, except one year. In the beginning when I got here I missed 2008 and then I started in 2009 – 2010, and then I will do the last concert this year because they are going to fold up. It is a nighttime thing and they are just not – they are scheduled to go out with a bang. I am still with them. And then after – let's see – what else were we in. Then I belonged to Palm Brook Country Club for twenty years. But I quit because I don't go often so I just stopped. Let's see – what else did I do – those two things. Then after my husband died I wanted to meet new people, so I joined the art museum and that was – well he died in '92 so I joined right away and I have been heavily involved in the art museum. What did I know about art? I never was in anything before back in Milwaukee – nothing – but here it just seemed to be something. I don't know anything about art – the people were so wonderful and I am still with them. The West Valley Art Museum. And of course you can see I have done so many things for them – I have built a kitchen for them. Right after I got there I built a kitchen. I did the recreation of the patio – I did that outside. So now whoever is going to buy the building is getting my kitchen and everything. And as you can see outside – my plaque out there. The Helene Gumina Sculptor Gardens. Well that was at the art museum. And I wanted all my plaques. I have one here – Helene's Kitchen – and then I have one out in front that is also Sculpture Gardens and I didn't know where to put them so I just put them here – but that other one over there is from the symphony when they used to be at the Sun Dome. For many years we used to be at the Sun Dome. This was around the fountain out in front and those that had two plaques, because his and my name were on them – we were on the top. So I didn't want to leave them there either, so I just went out and got them. So I got more plaques around here. I don't know how much of a sculpture garden I have but anyway I wanted it. They were just maybe going to throw them

away anyway.

**BROWN:** So you are talking about the West Valley Symphony.

**GUMINA:** West Valley Symphony. Not anybody else – it is our symphony out here in the Sun Cities.

**BROWN:** And you were at the Sun Dome?

**GUMINA:** Many years at the Sun Dome until they sold it and then ASU took it over and then they sold it to somebody else. But getting back to the symphony, I think I told you but – I think I told you that we did the symphony chair – first symphony chair for him.

**BROWN:** What was his name?

**GUMINA:** Ted Dzuib – I don't know how you spell it. I don't even know. It has been so long. He is gone now. He was great. He was here five years before we moved here so he knew all these people. His wife was not well and that is why they moved out here. He kept saying Ted why don't you come here. It is just wonderful. Ted says I can't leave my job – I can't leave my family – I can't leave my friends – and then when the Doctor told him he had to move -

**BROWN:** Were you sponsor – or did you play?

**GUMINA:** No – no – I only sponsored. Everything they had – the guilds and whatever – the same as I did at the Art Museum. I was overloaded with everything and I was trustee for the Art Museum and the Symphony and then I did – in 1996 I think some donation for \$100,000.

**BROWN:** What did that involve?

**GUMINA:** Well that was – they haven't got the money yet because I am still living. It was invested. So when I die they get the \$100,000.

**BROWN:** You earned that much for them?

**GUMINA:** Oh no, I just gave it to them.

**BROWN:** What was the “maestros”? What was that all about?

**GUMINA:** That was Maestro Ysted. I did that for him. That was in 1996, I think.

**BROWN:** But was it a series of musicals or music----

**GUMINA:** That I did?

**BROWN:** Yes

**GUMINA:** I did a concert every year – every second year or every third year and that was about 300,000, that was what a concert cost. You know they could never afford to hire all these people – and they were looking for help to support them. So, whatever they needed I seemed to do. Money was easy for me. I had a lot and I spent a lot. This is not for communication though. But I have given all of the organizations – I wrote them all down – quarter of a million dollars in my lifetime. But I don't advertise it. Our church says it is all for the Lord. And then I got involved in the Southwest College. It is a religious school for kids – for grown-ups.

**BROWN:** Where is it?

**GUMINA:** Oh, near Scottsdale – in Phoenix it is, and way down, it is too far. So I got involved in that because one of our fellows in church was a director down there and he took me down for a couple of concerts. I met everybody and you know I easily meet people. I like them right away. Then I met the choir and they had a choir you know. So I gave them money and they just came up to our church a week ago Sunday for a concert. They were all dressed in long black gowns and they are young and they looked nice, so I have given them quite a bit of money too. Just – I am only interested in music – I am not interested in any schools or anything else – all music. That's what I like to do. So that takes care of the West Valley Chorale. Now, the last five years, I have been involved in the West Valley Chorale. That is a Chorale group. Why I got started in that – a couple of – about four members of our church that sang in the choir sang with them. But then our church got so busy – we have about 130 in our choir you know. So they got too busy so they had to quit. So that is how come I got started there with Paul Yoder. He is well known around here. I think he is going to run for Government of some kind now. But he was there. So I got started with that and I am still continuing

because I love what they do. So and then – what else. So and then Butterfield musicals was part of the symphony. That was Jennings Butterfield – he was the one that started the symphony years ago. We knew him years ago and this was his wife. She started the Butterfield musical and that was another concert on a Sunday afternoon. So I always went to that. I always ushered too – it just seems that I was always ushering or doing something in my lifetime. Then I joined – I belonged to two of the organ clubs.

**BROWN:** You are a musician in your own right then.

**GUMINA:** Well, I don't know. Inwardly I am, but outwardly I don't know. I don't read music, I put a disc in now – get the rhythm going and that is what I like, you know. And every time I bought a new organ I didn't even have the other one paid for and so I just exchanged it. That's how it goes. They always offer something else in the new one. So anyway, that was that. I don't know – I am still involved in the West Valley Chorale and if the Art Museum starts up again – and the symphony was out for two years but they didn't file for bankruptcy they just stopped for two years. Then they came back on a small scale – four concerts a year where otherwise they gave a concert every month – they do four a year. So I am still listed as an honorary trustee in their – and they have all the donations listed on that too – even though it is real old – I'm always listed because I have been so long here. So that started up again so I give then just a little bit because they are going to get that \$100,000 some day but not until I die. And I am just not dying. I am just hanging on – why I don't know. I don't know. I love to entertain – I love to cook – I used to. That is why we have the big house. Two times we enlarged the house so I can have fifty people here like nothing you know. But I used to entertain a lot, even when my husband was alive and even after he died. I loved to cook and that but as I am getting older now – I want to and I know I could but I don't. You know how that goes? You have good days and you have bad days. My church is only two blocks over here so it is real handy. And I was quite involved in ?? Country Club. I was on the board there for many years. I loved it when I was there, you know, but there comes a time when you have to give up I think. How many people are still involved at almost 97? There aren't many. But I am ready to go anytime. I have a friend, Jim, who is my legal adviser, I don't do anything myself. He is from Milwaukee also. When they moved here – he moved here with four little kids and a mother-in-law. He gave up his insurance business in Milwaukee and then my husband took him under his wing for three years; he was alive yet for three years cause he died in '92. So we had lunch with him all the time and taught him all that he knew and now he is a big business man here,

investments and this and that and I trust him. So he has made it possible for me to do all these things. I ask no question. I don't worry about a thing, every body is worried about every thing, but I don't worry about anything. My husband was a frugal investor – utilities – now people wouldn't think of buying utilities nowadays, but they were always safe.

**BROWN:** So you have enjoyed living in Sun City.

**GUMINA:** I love Sun City but I have to tell you that I don't know if I have ever been down to the building. I just don't know.

**BROWN:** What building?

**GUMINA:** By the rec center. The first building here that they built.

**BROWN:** Oh, Oakmont.

**GUMINA:** Yes, Oakmont. Now next Sunday they are going to have open house and Tanya Griffith, I know her real well and her husband used to be the trustee at the Art Museum for three years and then he quit now. She has entertained all her life you know. So I want to go and I will go right from church cause I think it starts at 12:30 or something like that. Then I will go over and see the house because -

**BROWN:** The original house – the Historical Society.

**GUMINA:** Yes, I never was in there. I guess I was just too – you know there are lots of things that I have never seen here because I was so busy. Too busy in other kind of things.

**BROWN:** There is something for everybody here, isn't there?

**GUMINA:** But now I don't use the rec centers at all really.

**BROWN:** But you used to?

**GUMINA:** All the time .I still pay my dues. You know, I was just thinking this year, you know, I don't go anytime. I wonder do they let you quit?

**BROWN:** No

**GUMINA:** Oh, you never do. If you don't use it? I don't pay a whole lot, but I pay enough you know. I pay 200 about, it is up that high. So I do that.

**BROWN:** Like you said, you used to enjoy it – the rec centers -

**GUMINA:** OH, I enjoyed all of the rec centers.

**BROWN:** Did you ever belong to any of the clubs?

**GUMINA:** Just the organ club. But when I first moved here I went for sewing because I did sew myself. But they never could fit me – never could fit me, but I learned a lot and I enjoyed it anyway. Then I went for flower making. I think I did that. They showed me wonderful things. But I never – when my husband was alive that was different. We would go to different occasions – but I, being alone don't do that. I am still driving at almost 97. I bought a new car, a Toyota and I have a five year driver's license. I'll know when I can't drive. I'll know that. You have a feeling that you can't, or you are in an accident or something like that. So I feel that I am fortunate because I am able to get around. I am able to do the little work that I do. I vacuum a lot because my whole house is carpeted, I don't have any tile so I am not going to fall anywhere.

**BROWN:** Do you have children?

**GUMINA:** I have two. They are in Milwaukee. But it seems as if all the years we lived here I never heard from either one. But the minute my husband died then my daughter comes out of the wood work. She wanted this, she needed that, so I supplied her with all that stuff. But my son never asked for anything. So I think in the 35 years now my daughter has been here twice. My son came for my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. I had a big celebration at the Art Museum. A formal party and then I had a big one at church with over 300 people. Yet he came with seven of them. My grandson and a granddaughter and her three little kids. And that was wonderful. That was the first time they were ever here. And then my son when he left he said "I'll see you in five years, Mom". Five years. But he calls a lot now. Five years was last year and they didn't come because his wife celebrated her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday and they had a big party. But they came this year – last year – July 6<sup>th</sup> – my birthday – and they came all seven of them – the same ones. But they had gotten so big I couldn't believe it. My grandchildren, she was a young lady when she was



fourteen, but she was a young lady – he was thirteen and the little one was nine. But they call me all the time. They keep in touch with me now so I appreciate that because my daughter doesn't call. So when I die they are not getting much because they have never done anything for me. Oh and the last time I talked to my daughter, the 13<sup>th</sup> of September was her birthday and I said to her why don't you ever come out and visit me. She says, you never ask me. I said since when does a mother have to ask her daughter to come out. Now she quit her job and now she is not well – she has had two back surgeries, but she never told anybody. So she worked her whole life, so she said and she even had three jobs at one time. Then I said to her, why don't you come out here and find a place. She says – I said you could find something. Oh she was kind of looking around in Milwaukee for a condo or something. If she wants to stay in the cold, OK. So I said to her, why don't you come out here. She says – I said you could maybe even find something for 100,000 because things are cheap now. She said, I am not changing my attitude or my way of living – that is the way I have been all my life and that is the way I am going to stay. Now she is not well – when you are not well you have to make some changes some place.

**BROWN:** They don't know what they are missing -

**GUMINA:** No they don't. They don't know me at all. They don't know about Sun City: It would be wonderful for her – whether she is waiting until I die and she thinks she is going to get this house, I don't know. But I am selling the house. I am not leaving it to them – to her – because she has seen what I have and she maybe liked it but you know I have been looking at the papers on Sunday. I always look at that one ad where they got the picture in the front, you know, where they got the house for sale. And a lot of them are a hundred forty seven that are two bedrooms, even two baths, everything, what more does she want. Out here the houses are different than back there. So I just don't know.

**BROWN:** Now back to Sun City.

**GUMINA:** And so then I told you I joined the two churches. I gave one to my friend Jim and one to my Pastor at that time of the church.

**BROWN:** Now you need to explain that.

**GUMINA:** The churches? Well I just had them build a church.

**BROWN:** Where?

**GUMINA:** In India.

**BROWN:** One in India.

**GUMINA:** These are all the people that lived there that didn't have a church. Then when I built the church -

**BROWN:** So how did you find out that they needed a church?

**GUMINA:** Well, we had a gal that went to church and she had a friend that worked at the office in Iowa, before she moved here – and he came to visit one time at her house, and she had a little group over from the church and showed some pictures and I fell for it. That is how that happened. So then they sent me a plaque with all the pictures on it.

**BROWN:** So that is a picture of the church that you had built -

**GUMINA:** This one is in India – oh Nigeria – so that is the same, he came again and so I bought another church you know. You can take all over the world, they are all looking, like in China that are more expensive, so I only paid about 8,000 for both of them and 8,000 for that. That wasn't that much. You know, 8000 don't mean much to me, I hate to say that.

**BROWN:** But it does to them. It is wonderful you are able to do that.

**GUMINA:** That is all I did. I wrote a letter to them because this man quit now and went elsewhere. So I wrote the President and asked how up-to-date because I wanted to see a picture of the inside of the church. I haven't heard from them, so I don't know what is going on. And the symphony has been good to me, they always gave me something. They gave me this too, so this is my whole wall. And over there I am trustee in both symphony and music. All my concerts are around the corner, they are on the wall there.

**BROWN:** So we just walked around the room and Helene showed me plaques and honorary awards she has received from all the various organizations that she has supported and helped with. Is there anything you would like to add for the Historical Society?

**GUMINA:** Well, I really don't know. I think they are doing a good job and I think it is wonderful that they keep up the history of Sun City, because in 1960, you know – it is a long time and people that came at that time seemed to love it – bought houses right away. Now I never met Del Webb, never met him, he died just before I moved here you know. But I don't know, I think times have changed since that time. I knew a lot of people that worked for Del Webb in different places and so whenever I go someplace and see them, they would be a receptionist some place – things like that. But I think Sun City is a wonderful, wonderful place. I don't know much about Sun City West or Sun City Grand, but I think the whole history of Del Webb is Sun City. If he had lived maybe he would have extended it out himself, but this way I just don't know, but I really appreciate all that they have given me the opportunity to do what I wanted to do. Oh, I forgot to tell you, I am also involved in my church. I forgot to even tell you that. We are not supposed to ever say anything, because we are doing it for the Lord. But I have done seven things for my church. I have done the kitchen over there, I have done the ice machine, I have bought four new stoves, I did the prayer room – re-did the whole thing. There is a handicapped railing that I did too. Now I just gave them an annuity of \$30,000, and I won't give them anymore now when I die. And I also gave out of that \$10,000 to the choir because I am interested in music so I wanted them to get something. What they are going to do with the money I don't know, but they were thankful that they got it but you get no recognition. You know, they don't believe in it. But, my Jim, he went to the meeting because it was his idea and he told them, he said “there is a lady who is used to getting thank you notes her whole life from all of her organizations, and there are many of them and that is the least you could do is thank her. Well, it didn't come and it didn't come and then at last a letter came from the Pastor and another guy and another guy who was the head of the trustees and my music director. So now I am happy. Nobody else knows about it, they don't advertise nothing like that but all my organizations, all I have got is thank you notes – all the time – from everybody. He says maybe the church don't allow it and the Lord knows what she does, but she is used to this and I think that is the least you can do.

**BROWN:** OK Helene, thank you very much. I appreciate you telling us your story about your time in Sun City.

## Profile

### Hoover Member Helene Gumina

"Keep busy and stay involved" is the motto by which Helene Gumina lives her life. Helene's philanthropy and community involvement are well known throughout the West Valley. Her goal is to carry on the philanthropic legacy of her husband and then to create her own. Helene joined the West Valley Art Museum in 1994 because she wanted to meet new people. Charles Kaye, a Museum member, was instrumental in introducing Helene to the Museum and all it has to offer.

Plans were underway to expand the size of the Museum, and with a love of cooking, Helene readily agreed to provide the funds for this venture. Helene's Kitchen, located adjacent to the Stone Tea Room. *Classic Cafe* now located within this room, provides all of the Museum's catering needs. Outside the *Cafe* was a modest sculpture garden area which had been created for the patrons of the Museum to enjoy. Helene's support provided flower boxes and palm trees to further enhance the garden. These were Helene's first projects. She also provided support to purchase 200 chairs and 40 tables to use during cultural events. Recently, another project captured her attention, the need for gallery walls to have a fresh coat of paint. Once again, Helene came to the rescue.

Her support of The Symphony of the West Valley and Grace Bible Church have been equally impressive. She sponsors one Chamber music event per year and has established a Chair in the violin section of the Symphony as well as the Maestro's Podium. One of the first individuals to do so, Helene also sponsors a concert every three years at the Symphony.

First and foremost in Helene's life is her church. They are like family to her. In honor of her late husband, Theodore, she supported the renovation of the kitchen at this Church and also remodeled the prayer room. Helene's support of Church missionary work included adoption of a family for 15 years.

The fact that Helen was a gymnast from age 16 to well into her 30's may be part of the reason for her boundless energy and enthusiasm for her philanthropy as well as giving of herself to various organizations: Secretary and President of the Organ Club, usher at Chamber Music events, Austrian Folk Dancing and Viennese Waltz Group, a Lioness since 1978, a member of Palmbrook Country Club in Sun City, a *Butterfield Musicale* past Board Member, an honorary trustee of the Symphony, a past member of the Board of Trustees of our Museum.

Helene's credo for a fulfilling and successful life is "work hard, enjoy life and keep active".



## New Members

### JUNE

Mr/Mrs. Tom Benford  
Mrs. Gail Bliss  
Mrs. June Brady  
Mrs. Edith A. Brozka  
Mrs. Doris Bursheim  
Mr/Mrs. Donell L. Cox  
Mrs. Patricia M. Cross  
Mrs. Frances T. Desmond  
Mr/Mrs. Thomas Edinger  
Mr. Hart Hall  
Mrs. K. J. Hall  
Mrs. Mary A. Holm  
Ms. Sherry Hutt  
Mrs. Antoinette Koprowski-Ruiz  
Mr. Bill Lohmeyer  
Mr/Mrs. John A. Lynn  
Mrs. Norene Mattas  
Mr/Mrs. Robert A. May

Mr/Mrs. William J. Mc Carthy  
Mr/Mrs. David L. Mc Clenagan  
Mr. Jivantoro Mentis  
Mrs. Palma Mitzel  
Mrs. Karen Nimmons  
Mr/Mrs. John Orth  
Mrs. Gail Peterson  
Mr. Herbert Petty  
Mr. Maurice C. Rouse  
Mrs. Nancy R. Schramm  
Mr/Mrs. William D. Thomas  
Mr/Mrs. Charles F. White

### JULY

Mr. Lauren Barton  
Mrs. Mary Catledge  
Mr/Mrs. Jewett Conradson  
Mrs. Barbara Henrickson  
Mrs. Dorothy Howard  
Mr/Mrs. Eugene Lee  
Mrs. Bev Lichty  
Mr/Mrs. Brian Mc Dermott  
Mr. Gerald Miller  
Ms. Judy Murphy  
Mrs. Barbara H. Podalsky  
Mr/Mrs. Paul Pulicken  
Mr/Mrs. Reish  
Mr/Mrs. Donn Spencer  
Mrs. Rachel Swinford  
Mrs. Stephanie M. Szymanski  
Mr. David Tooker  
Mrs. Mary Dehn Van Dessel

ALBERT L. ROTH  
19825 WELK DRIVE  
SUN CITY, ARIZONA 85373-1060  
1-602-972-2054

October 4, 1994

EDITOR  
DOERS PROFILE  
DAILY NEWS-SUN  
10102 SANTA FE DRIVE  
SUN CITY, ARIZONA 85351

MAY I SUGGEST A PROSPECT FOR THE DOERS FILE?

HELENE GUMINA  
10403 PONDEROSA  
SUN CITY, ARIZONA 85373  
PHONE NUMBER 933-3705

HELENE HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS.

SHE BELONGS TO THE GRACE BIBLE CHURCH, IS ACTIVE IN ITS ORGANIZATION, AND ESPECIALLY HELPFUL IN THE FLOCK MINISTRY. SHE HELPS IN THE MONTHLY MEETINGS AND BUFFET SUPPERS.

SHE BELONGS TO THE ORGAN CLUB, AND IS AN ORGANIST STILL TAKING LESSONS. SHE BELONGS TO THE SYMPHONY AND HAS AND IS SPONSORING SOME OF THEIR PROGRAMS.

SHE HAS RECENTLY JOINED THE SUN CITIES MUSEUM AND IS BECOMING ACTIVE IN THAT ORGANIZATION.

SHE IS A PLEASANT AND ACTIVE PERSON. SHE IS A VERY DEPENDABLE AND HAS MANY GOOD IDEAS FOR THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT SHE WORKS WITH.

THANK YOU.

*Albert Roth*

ALBERT ROTH

Oct 17, 1977

# DOERS PROFILE

Helene  
Gumina



**Vita:** *Homemaker and employed for six years with an investment brokerage firm.*

**Hometown:** *Milwaukee, Wisc.*

**Marital Status:** *Married 26 years to late husband, Ted; two children; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.*

**Self-Portrait:** *"Organized, friendly, loves crafts, loves to cook and entertain at home."*

**Greatest feat:** *"Learning to play the organ because I never thought I'd ever do it."*

**Inspiration:** *"My husband. He put me on a pedestal, and I'm still there and I don't want to get off it. That's why I'm continuing his (philanthropic) work".*

**Key to longevity:** *"The secret of everything is not to sit home and moan and groan and brood."*

## SC woman loves life, lives to serve

By J.J. McCORMACK  
Daily News-Sun staff

Helene Gumina's love for music shows in the time and money she donates to local musical organizations.

A love of cooking has translated into new kitchens for the Sun Cities Art Museum and her beloved Grace Bible Church.

Gumina loves people, too, made evident in the way she greets everyone at church on Sunday mornings: She walks down the aisle in the worship center shaking hands with everyone seated before her.

Her love of people is also evident in the way she says goodbye to someone she just met — with a hug.

Another of Gumina's loves? Life.  
How do I know? She told me.

How do I know? She told me.

"I love life. I love to entertain. I love to be involved and I love my church," she said.

A widow, Gumina isn't lonely.

"How can anybody be lonely if they get involved?" she asked.

In addition to church, which she attends four or five times a week, Gumina is affiliated with 10 clubs and non-profit organizations. Most of her involvements are with musical organizations, including one for which she sometimes performs: the Sun City Organ Club. She is in line for the club presidency next year.

Gumina learned to play the organ, an instrument that brings her much joy, after retiring to Sun City 18 years ago with her late husband, Ted. The couple became music patrons in part as a result of the influence of Ted's longtime friend, Ted Dziubek, a violinist with the Sun Cities Symphony who retired last year. In Dziubek's honor, the Gumina's endowed a violin chair to the symphony. That was in 1989.

"We just got involved in everything musical," Gumina said, noting her husband was grateful for what he had been given in life and wanted to give something back.

Recognizing a need among performance groups like the symphony, Ted Gumina decided that's where he would direct his philanthropic efforts. Helene is carrying on her husband's legacy.

"I'm just continuing what he started. I think he would approve. I feel real good about it."

Today, Gumina serves on the board of directors for the symphony and is sponsoring one of their concerts this season. She is a member and volunteer usher for the Sun Cities Chamber Music Society. She is a member of the Butterfield Musicales and is sponsoring one of that group's concerts this season.

Those are just some of the musical organizations Gumina has aligned with. In the non-musical arena, she is a member and past president of the Early Birds Lioness club.

"If the Lord keeps me going, I hope to do many other things," she said.

Despite her strong commitment to organizations fostering music appreciation, church comes first on Gumina's priority list.

"Even though I'm so involved, I still have time for my church," she said.

"The people there (at Grace Bible) are so wonderful and they take care of one another like a family," she said.

# Sun Citian donates \$100,000 to symphony

The Sun Cities Symphony Orchestra Association last week received a donation of \$100,000 to its endowment fund from a long-time patron.

Helene Gumina, a 20-year resident of Sun City, has established a charitable remainder trust for the Conductor's Podium of the Sun Cities Symphony, announced Dee Hjernstad, the association's president.

Mrs. Gumina and her husband, Ted, who passed away in 1992, moved to Sun City from Brookfield, Wisc. They have been



Photo by Lu Urdang

**GUMINA**

considered tremendous supporters of the cultural arts in the community over the years.

Mr. and Mrs. Gumina endowed the associate concertmaster chair in honor of Ted Dziubek in 1988. Mrs. Gumina has also been a frequent sponsor of subscription concerts of the symphony.

The gift raises the endowment fund balance to more than \$400,000. Edmund L. Detering was

instrumental in the establishment of the orchestra's endowment fund and has served as chairman of the endowment committee since its inception.

Several principal chairs have already been endowed. There are 13 chairs remaining; the minimum donation for a chair is \$25,000.

Donations to the endowment fund are tax-deductible. For information, call 972-4484.



## Symphony contributor is named 'Honorary Trustee'

By Marie Scotti

Helene Gumina, a Sun City resident since 1976, was named an honorary trustee of the Sun Cities Symphony Orchestra Association at its Dec. 20 concert, held at the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts. She received a framed certificate and a pendant from Symphony Association Pres. Joe Schoggen. "I'm overwhelmed," Gumina said as she accepted the award.

Gumina and her husband Theodore, who was in the stock brokerage business and is now deceased, have been regular contributors of large sums to support the orchestra.

"Since the orchestra was founded 31 years ago, the bylaws have said, that only the original directors would become honorary trustees," Schoggen told the audience of more than 3,000. "No one has since been so designated, but once in a great while the contributions of an individual are so significant that something extra is needed to recognize them."

The bylaws have been changed noted Schoggen, to allow the Board to honor Gumina whom he called "a very exceptional person and a true friend of the Symphony."

In 1988, Helene and her husband endowed the Associate Concertmaster Chair of the Sun Cities Symphony of the West Valley in honor of their friend Ted Dziubek, by contributing \$25,000 to the Symphony's Endowment Fund.



Helene Gumina has been a very special friend to the Sun Cities Symphony of the West Valley since 1976. She was recently proclaimed an "Honorary Trustee" of the Association.

In 1996 Helen endowed the Conductor's podium of the Symphony by establishing a Charitable Remainder Trust in the amount of \$100,000. She sponsored concerts for three years.

In 1998, Helen contributed a \$10,000 matching grant to the Symphony's Annual Fund Campaign and \$5,000 to underwrite, in part, the entertainment for the Symphony's fund-raising gala.

Helene is a member of the Stradivarius Society and Golden Baton Circle for her generous support of the Symphony.

Helen says, "I learned all about this classical music after Ted and I moved here and I guess I just keep going at it." The Symphony of the West Valley Proclamation read: "Helene's indomitable zest for life and quintessential spirit have forever endeared her to the Symphony, its Board of Directors and management." She did serve as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Symphony from 1994 to 1997.



Submitted photo

### **King-size donation**

Lion Helen Gunima, a contributor to several community projects, has made a generous gift of \$1,000 to the Sun Cities Lions Foundation. Donations to the Foundation are not rare, but they usually specify some aspect of charity for application. What is unusual about Helene's gift is that it is in response to a request for funds to be used for property maintenance. The property committee has been given the option of applying the money at their discretion.



**E.B. MCGOVERN/DAILY NEWS-SUN**

Steve Allen signs autographs for admiring fans on Oct. 31, 1999, his last appearance in the Sun Cities. Allen was attending a reception at the West Valley Art Museum following his performance with the Symphony of the West Valley.

# note

## Symphony pays tribute to contributor

By BRUCE ELLISON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

**H**elene Gumina, who says she didn't know anything about classical music when she moved to the Sun Cities 22 years ago, on Sunday was made an honorary trustee of the Sun Cities Symphony Orchestra Association.

The award, presented at the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts before Sunday's concert, caught Gumina by surprise.

"I'm overwhelmed," Gumina said as she accepted a framed certificate and pendant from Symphony Association President Joe Schoggen.

"I don't know what to say.

"I have so many wonderful friends in the symphony and I love them all," was all she said.

Gumina and her husband Theodore, who was in the stock brokerage business in Minnesota and is now deceased, have been regular contributors of large sums to support the orchestra, something which Schoggen noted in his citation, which was printed in the program.

He also pointed out that the sym-

phony board had to change the bylaws to honor Gumina.

"Since the orchestra was founded 31 years ago, the bylaws have said that only the original directors would become honorary trustees," Schoggen told the crowd of about 3,000 people.

"No one has since been so designated, but once in a great while the contributions of an individual are so significant that something extra is needed" to recognize them.

"The bylaws have been changed," he said, to allow the board to honor Gumina whom he called "a very ex-

ceptional person and a true friend of the symphony."

Gumina also was given a small silver pendant with the words honorary trustee, "because it's hard to carry around a plaque with you," Schoggen said.

Gumina is a familiar sight at symphony concerts and related events, and carries on similar work for and makes similar contributions to the Sun Cities Chamber Music Society where she often helps out as an usher at concerts.

"I learned all about this (classical music) after Ted and I moved here, and I guess I just keep going at it," she said at intermission Sunday as she

showed the pendant to well-wishers.

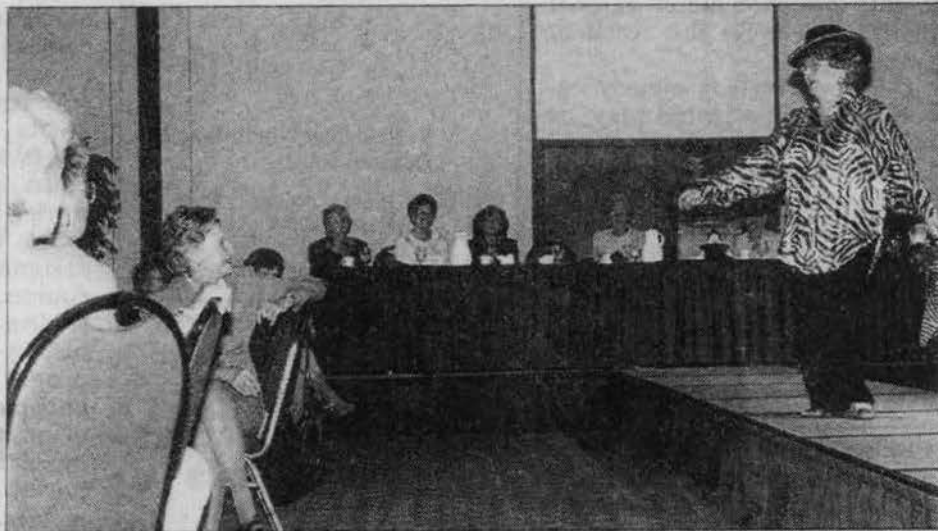
The couple in 1988 endowed the associate concertmaster chair of the symphony, contributing \$25,000 to the endowment fund. They made the gift to honor their friend, Ted Dziubek, the man who introduced the couple to classical music and to the orchestra.

In 1996, Helene Gumina established a \$100,000 charitable remainder trust for the symphony. She sponsored concerts for three years, donated the hand-made conductor's podium, and this year contributed a \$10,000 matching grant to the endowment fund and \$5,000 to underwrite in part the symphony's fund-raising gala.



Lisa Goettsche/Daily News-Sun

Helene Gumina is congratulated by Joe Schoggen, president of Sun Cities Symphony Orchestra Association, during a reception in Gumina's honor at West Valley Art Museum.



Gregory Harris/Daily News-Sun

Sun Cities Symphony Guild members look on as Helene Gumina of Sun City shows off her outfit at their benefit fashion show at The Lakes Club Friday. Fashions for the benefit were provided by Fashions Continental of Sun City.

# Scene

*Beautiful photo -  
very glittering -  
as always!!  
Daily News - Sun*

MONDAY, JUNE 9, 2003



**MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN**

Jim Tewalt escorts Helene Gumina of Sun City to a celebration of her 90th birthday Saturday at the West Valley Art Museum, Surprise, where friends paid tribute to her philanthropy toward the Symphony of the West Valley, Sun Cities Chamber Music Society, the museum and many local organizations. Gumina's support of the local arts began in 1976 shortly after she and her husband, Ted, moved to Sun City. The celebration of her life featured tributes by Wally Steffan, executive director, and Karen Redding, former director of the music; Nancy Root, past president of the music society; James Yestadt, music director and conductor, Richard Shelton, executive director, and Joe Schoggen and Jim Lapsley, past presidents, all with the symphony; and Tewalt of Estate Planning Solutions. Entertainment was by Paul Yoder, artistic director West Valley Chorale, accompanied by Jeffrey Yoder, director of chorale activities for Gateway High School; and Dr. William G. Bjork, senior pastor of Grace Bible Church.

## About Helene



### **Celebrating "Almost a Century" of Hugs and Smiles!**

On July 6, 1913 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the world was graced with an "angel." Helene Gumina was a gymnast, dancer and great lover of music. She worked in an investment office for six years until she married the "boss and love of her life" Ted Gumina. Ted and Helene moved to Sun City in 1976, where they continued to support a number of arts and community service organizations. In 1989 Ted and Helene became Christians and joined Grace Bible Church.

When you hear Helene Gumina speak about her love for the arts, you think you are talking to someone 30 years younger than her 90 energy-rich years. Known for her flair for fashion and love of beautiful hats, Helene always greets you with a smile and a hug.

*"The secret to staying young is keeping busy -- no reason to sit around at home doing nothing and complaining! I love my church, I love my friends, I love the organizations I volunteer for, and I love my Symphony! My husband taught me the importance of philanthropy and that is why I am continuing his efforts. When you give of yourself ... and your time ... to make others happy ... then you are doing the work of the Lord."*

A loyal supporter of "everything musical" and many other West Valley organizations, Helene's achievement of service is both impressive and amazing. She gives of her time, treasure and talent, and happily carries on the legacy of her late husband Ted. Helene has been our "resident hugging" angel and, along with her warm friendly smile and countless hugs, she has given hundreds of thousands of dollars to various West Valley organizations during the last 25 years.

As we celebrate Helene's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, we salute her with gratitude of service and sincere appreciation for her wonderful generosity. She exemplifies service, love, compassion, and enthusiastic involvement.

**Helene is an inspiration to everyone and  
truly is Our Hugging Angel!**

## INSIDE:

- Monthly Club Listings
- Local News (2003)

Around

# WESTER Territory

## A memorable afternoon for area arts patron

By Ruth Borchardt

With a mind as sharp as a razor, Sun City West resident and arts patron Helene Gumina kept an audience at Palmbrook Country Club's Friendship Club awe-struck with her youthful vitality at an age when most people are slowing down.

Attired in a black dress and a large red hat, after a delicious luncheon of turkey and caramel sundae, she took the microphone, walking back and forth in front of the dias giving an accounting of her fascinating life. She told how she enjoys every day to the maximum.

"Yes, I'm lucky to have money," she said, "but I enjoy spending it." Listed among her benefi-

ciaries are they Symphony of the West Valley, the Art Museum of the West Valley and Butterfield Musicals, just to mention a few.

She emphasized how activity keeps you young. However, she went a little to far a couple of years ago, "climbing up on a ladder than falling down while trying to return some Christmas decorations to their storage place."

Unbelievably, she claims she washes her own car, washes her windows and is continually active.

With her spontaneity and joy for living she seemed to be an inspiration to all who heard her.

She recounted how she became



Helene Gumina (center) is shown with luncheon co-chairs Helen Zeuker (l.) and AnnaLee Harm. Photo, Ruth Borchardt

affiliated with her present church and the benefit she has derived from her further study of the Bible. She makes it a point to, as

often as possible, to take her friends for brunch at Palmbrook.

From the audiences stand point it was a rewarding afternoon.

## Photo print show

The Photography West Print show was held recently at the Beardsley Rec Center, conducted by Willard Mears, 88 prints from all around the world—in various categories—were mounted on several racks for easy, close viewing.

The winners, as selected by three experienced judges, were:

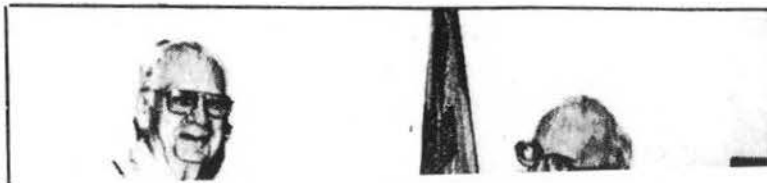
• Class Advanced—Dark Color—1st Place: Betty Littlejohn; 2nd Place: Betty Littlejohn; 3rd Place: Jo Boule.

• Class Master—Color—1st Place: Lloyd Carlson; 2nd Place: Pat Leprich; 3rd Place: Eders; Honorable Mention: Flowers.

## Clark is top SCW cop for 2003

By Randy Altenhoff

A retired Chief Warrant Officer with 36 years active and re-



## SCW Rotary Luau, Musical Review raised funds

By Ruth Borchardt

The Sun City West Rotary Club has done it again! This time with a record-breaking attendance and the amount received from one of its





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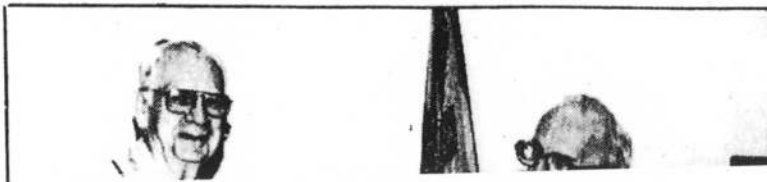
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## Symphony Guild elects honorary member

By Marie Scotti

The West Valley Symphony Guild unanimously elected Helene Gumina of Sun City to become an Honorary Member. The election took place during the recent West Valley Symphony luncheon.

Helene has been a great supporter of the West Valley Symphony and the West Valley Symphony Guild for a number of years. She has a great appreciation for music and the arts and had made a number of significant contributions to the Symphony and the Guild.

The Symphony Guild provides educational events, and renders financial support of the West Valley Symphony.



Helene Gumina  
Photo, Marie Scotti



Steve Chermek/Daily News-Sun

Helene Gumina of Sun City, center, tries to get Surprise Mayor Joan Shafer to dance to the music of the Western Swingers, at the West Valley Art Museum's annual western barbecue. At right, Sheriff Willy Garlick of Sun City nabs Millie Sprague of Sun City during the event Saturday. Garlick is a security guard at the museum in Surprise.

The Daily News-Sun welcomes your comments and news tips. To contact Ian Mitchell, news editor, call 977-4660.

# Community

## Notable gift

### Sun City woman adds \$100,000 to symphony endowment fund

Staff report

SUN CITY — A gift of \$100,000 from resident Helene Gumina has pushed the Endowment Fund of the Sun Cities Symphony Orchestra to more than \$400,000.

Mrs. Gumina's gift, in the form of a charitable remainder trust, was announced Wednesday at a "Luncheon with the Maestro" for orchestra board members and supporters.

Helene Gumina and her husband, Ted, who died in 1992, moved to Sun City some 20 years ago from Brookfield, Wis., and were early supporters of the symphony and of other area cultural events. The couple earlier endowed the Associate Concertmaster Chair of the Sun Cities Symphony in honor of Ted Dziubek.

The orchestra's endowment fund was established to support the continuing viability and success of the Sun Cities Symphony. It has received gifts in amounts ranging from a few

thousand dollars to the gift made this week by Mrs. Gumina.

Several principal chairs in the orchestra already have been endowed, with 13 chairs remaining. The minimum gift for endowing a principal chair is \$25,000, said Dee Hjernstad, president of the Sun Cities Symphony Orchestra Association, the orchestra's fund-raising arm.

During the luncheon, held at the Union Hills County Club, other contributors to the orchestra (members of its Stradivarius Society), and corporate and individual sponsors of concerts during the just-completed 1995-96 season, were honored.

Music director James Yestadt spoke briefly, and concertmaster Frank Spinosa and pianist Toni-Marie Montgomery provided a musical interlude for the event.

Information on endowment gifts is available from the symphony society office at 972-4484.



Steve Cherek/Daily News-Sun

Dee Hjernstad, left, and James Yestadt, conductor for the Sun Cities Symphony, thank Helene Gumina for her donation of \$100,000 to the association's endowment fund.

## The Symphony's "Hugging Angel"

When you hear Helene Gumina speak about her love for the arts, you think you are talking to someone 30 years younger than her 89 energy-rich years. Known for her flair for fashion and love of beautiful hats, Helene always greets you with a smile and a hug.

"The secret to staying young is keeping busy - no reason to sit around at home and moan and groan and brood. We are so fortunate in the West Valley to have our own professional Symphony. My Symphony makes me happy. The music makes you think beyond yourself. I love coming to the concerts. The Maestro is a talented, humble man, and he has brought the Symphony to new heights."

A loyal supporter of "everything musical" and many other West Valley organizations, Helene's achievement of service is both impressive and amazing. She gives of her time, treasure and talent, and happily carries on the legacy of her late husband



Ted. Helene has been the "resident hugging" angel for the Symphony of the West Valley for more than 25 years.

A generous supporter of the Symphony's annual fund and endowment, Helene is an inspiration to the community. She and her late husband, Ted, endowed the Associate Concertmaster Chair in 1988 in honor of their dear friend, Ted Dziubek. Several years later, Helene endowed the Maestro's podium with a \$100,000 gift. She sponsors

the Symphony's Benefit Gala entertainment every year and enjoys sponsoring a concert just about every other year.

"If you attend the concerts, you can't help but get involved. One can't just be a ticket subscriber, you have to support the Symphony too. All over the country Symphonies are struggling - we don't want that to happen to us! We have to 'take a stand for our Symphony!' You are never too old to support the Symphony - and never too young to enjoy its music. We have families of all ages come and experience the magic of the Symphony's music."

As Helene moves closer to celebrating her 90th birthday, we salute her with gratitude of service and sincere appreciation for her wonderful generosity. She exemplifies service, compassion for the mission, and enthusiastic involvement. **She truly is Our Hugging Angel!**

1-23-6



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Clarine Clampitt, left, the immediate past president of the West Valley Symphony Guild, Helene Gumina of Sun City, an honorary trustee of the guild, and Shirley Rhodes, guild president, pause for a moment during the guild's annual luncheon and fashion show Friday at Briarwood Country Club in Sun City West.

Helene Gumina, 93, right, of Sun City dances her way through a stilt walker's legs at the Carnivale event at the West Valley Art Museum in Surprise Saturday. Above, John and Jean Bayer listen attentively as Tarot Card Reader Rose McNicol reads the couple's past, present and future.



DETC BALL AD/DAILY NEWS-SUN



Submitted photo

## **Resident donates to Players**

Helen Gumina, 94, recently donated \$500 to the Sun City Players to help with its production of "Camelot," which opens March 9 for two weeks. A 30-year-resident of Sun City, Ms. Gumina is an active contributor to worthy causes and has in the past assisted the Sun Cities Symphony and West Valley Art Museum. Nancy Meyer, left, business manager for the Players, accepts the donation.



Dyuck Art Museum  
Dyuck

Joined Jan. 17, 1994

League Mar. 18, 1994

Board Member 1994 then on  
the Advisor Bd.

Butterfield Board -

Kitchen aug. 26 - 1994 - \$25,000  
" Cabinets added 1994 2700.-

Brick - Sept. 8, 1995 - \$100.

Matching Funds 1995 - \$550.00

Hoover Member 1996 - 2001 - 5-

Sam Ingram <sup>Book</sup> 3/20/95 - \$5,000

Capital Fund 10/8/96 - 11,064.27

<sup>200</sup> Chairs & Carts <sup>3</sup> 8/29, 96 - 5,420.00

Sculpture Garden 8/4/97 - 7,000

40 Round Tables 12/9/99 - 42,000

Connection Oven 9/15/97

Ice Machine 9/15/97 } 5025.00

Painting of Museum 7/20/01 - 2000

Computers 1/10/02 10,000

Display Cases - 1/11/24/23 -

Painting in + Out 17/25/05 \$10,650

10 ... - Painting

273  
273

## SUN CITIES AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

James Boswell, et. al.

Notes taken during an informal luncheon at the Lakes Club prior to the spring meeting of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

In attendance: Jim Boswell, John Meeker, Owen Childress, Jane Freeman, Louise & John Byrne and Glenn Sanberg. April 15, 1987

The following are some of the notes jotted down by Louise Byrne.

**Boswell:** Del Webb thought he was a much better golfer than he was. He played to an eight handicap but actually had a sixteen.

**Meeker:** He'd step up and tee off disregarding how close he was to the foursome ahead and who it was. Once everyone in back was piled up wondering what was delaying the game. Webb had stopped, left his golf car in the cart path and gone to lunch.

On the failures of the other Sun Cities – Kern City, Clear Lake City (near Houston) for Humble Oil, Hemet and Florida. We made some mistakes in even getting in some of them. But Webb was so hot after the AZ success that all the developers were approaching us. We had them put up the money. But in the long run most failed because they didn't have the on-site management that we had. Meeker studied the deal in Texas with Humble Oil, recommended that they simply set up the development and sell the lots. His recommendation was ignored. After Webb got out of it that's how it was built.

Meeker often "nearly fired", apparently usually by Johnson who objected to the Meeker Mountain and the Lakes Club.

**Meeker** said that in '65-'66 they were trying to come out of a slump. Apparently Meeker took over about that time and decided they had to "get involved with the people". **Boswell** says he feels the main reason for the continuing success was Meeker's ability to care and to be involved. Meeker said they built better rec facilities, brought the feuding rec center factions together. Said that many of his actions were in spite of "much opposition from our own company".

Of others in the company: **Bob Johnson** "never got a hand on things." He asked what some project cost – couldn't see the benefits of it. **Koontz** they called Freddie the Freshman. In answer to the question "what was his job" someone replied "keeping out of sight so he wouldn't get fired." – "Every project he was in charge of "went sour". He wanted to be Chairman of the Board. **Ashton** was a developer whose idea was to built at the least cost. He thought retired people wanted a little house with a porch and a rocking chair. He tried to keep from even building sidewalks to "save \$400."

Both **Childress** and **Boswell** commented on Meeker's ability to look at a blueprint and spot any flaws or possible improvements. Childress particularly, thought that was Meeker's special genius.

**Boswell** had a much greater part in management decisions than has been apparent in other conversations. He insisted that the development bear Webb's name for recognition factor, but that DEVCO should always be independent and separate from the main company. They said whenever the Webb Company butted in there were mistakes and problems. Boswell described his part in the building of Sun City after saying that the success was because Childress and Meeker kept close watch on everything. Boswell said "My job was to keep the Webb Company elsewhere."

**Meeker** cited the instance of 1965 when the market was down. Webb hired some specialists to come in. He told of a Kelly Snow, the expert, who had the bright idea of advertising to people from the northern states. "Trade in your show shovels and get a discount on your house." That ran into trouble when others bought shovels and insisted that they too get the discount. Another statement about the expert Snow. He was going to sell 100,000 per year. Didn't know where.

The three agreed that they could probably each take credit for about one third of the errors made. Boswell mentioned his concern that Sun City would look like a Levittown if there were no higher buildings or features to change the landscape. His idea was the two story apartment buildings on the golf course in Phase One. They seemed to consider that a bad call. Another one they discussed was the Rancho Estates section.

Asked about their worst or biggest mistakes Boswell said "giving up that 1%."