

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society
Interviewee: Jim Wurgler (JW) and Jodi Wurgler (JoW) Part 1
Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)
Subject: Grand Canyon Clinic
Date of Interview: 07/14/2016
Method of Interview: In person at Wurgler's house in Williams, AZ
Transcriber: Steven Caristo
Date of Transcription: 10/11/2016
Transcription Reviewers: Sue Priest, Dec. 2016
Keys: Indiana; New Mexico; Texas; Medical School

TM: Today is July 14, 2016. My name is Tom Martin. We are at the home of James and Jodi Wurgler. This is an oral history with the Grand Canyon Historical Society Oral History Program. Jim, can you state your name and spell your name for me please.

JW: There's even a little story there. I am officially known...even my Social Security name is Jim N. Wurgler. When I was quite small I obviously was born and given the name of James. From a very early age, I did not like the name James. It was too formal. So I insisted on going by Jim and when I got my first Social Security card at about age 16 maybe, that's the name I gave. That's how I'm listed in the Federal... My Medicare name is Jim N. Wurgler which creates all kinds of problems in the doctors' offices because my official name is James, but if they send a bill in to Medicare under James it gets kicked back because it doesn't match the number. The name is spelled W-u-r-g-l-e-r. I am 83 years old as of a couple of weeks ago. I was born June 28, 1933 which, if you consult your calendar, was in the right in the middle of the Great Depression. My father was a Methodist minister.

TM: Before you tell me about your father, the Methodist minister... here with us is your wife, Jodi. Jodi, could you state your name for me please.

JoW: It's Jodi Wurgler, but it's really Mary Jo Rae Wurgler. Jodi is a nickname my father gave me at one time. I was always called Jo Rae--the middle name--because a lot of girls were named Mary at the time. Rather than call me by the first name, I was called Jo Rae. Finally, my father got tired of that full name and called me Jodi. I don't know if it has anything to do with the movie "The Yearling" or what, because that was about that time. So that's me. I was born May 29, 1938. I was sort of at the end of the Depression, wasn't I? Or something like that. I don't know.

TM: Your father was a Methodist minister.

JW: Correct. I think my family, to me, is a little interesting in this regard. My mom and my dad grew up in Indiana near Indianapolis. They really led kind of interesting lives. My mom went to the University of California Berkeley in the mid-1920s and majored in math. How many women from that age and that era and so forth... You don't think of women as having that kind of approach to education. They went to school together, if I remember that correctly, in this small town outside of Indianapolis. They sort of together moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico just after she graduated from Berkeley, I think. They both had jobs. There was a boy's school in Albuquerque and there was a girl's school in Albuquerque. And she got a job at the girl's school and he got a job in the boy's school teaching. I think he was a coach. She never really talked that much about what she taught in school. Bottom line is that at a time when the Southwest was really just kind of foreign territory to most people, my dad rode a motorcycle from Indiana to New Mexico following whatever trail might exist. He used to talk about that.

TM: What year was this, roughly?

JW: Roughly mid-20s.

TM: That was a hard ride.

JW: He talks about when he rode his motorcycle in the Las Vegas/New Mexico area on the way to Albuquerque, the road basically was the bed of a dry creek. That was what they called “road” at the time. He used to tell us some stories about that. They had a spirit of adventure, but also over the years they both were very opinionated about certain things. I didn’t know for years—didn’t really realize—that the KKK pretty much started in Indiana. I’ve always thought of Indiana as being the Hoosier state. It was the North. Only in the South is where all the bigoted, prejudiced people lived and so forth. Turns out, Indiana was also a place that seemed to cultivate these things. I think that my parents...their philosophy that I grew up with was clearly one that did not support any of the bigotry, the prejudice, the Jim Crow, the racial differences that existed and still exist. So there’s another side to that story and this is strictly rumor. Rumor has it in my family, from one of my sisters, that my mother was sent to UC Berkeley by her parents to get her away from my father. That’s strictly rumor. I have no way of checking it because my aunts and uncles are all deceased. This was not the kind of conversation that took place. Until just recently, my sisters...they live in Las Cruces. The two of them do. So periodically we go down there and spend several days with them. We sort of rehash a whole host of things. They are both older than I am. So imagine that. I’m 83. One of them is 85. The other one is 87.

TM: So why do you think this is?

JW: Which? That they’re older than I am? [laughter]

TM: Why would your mother’s parents want to keep her away from your father?

JW: My mother’s parents were fairly well-to-do until the Depression—quite well-to-do. They owned a furniture store. There were other family members who were active in politics in Indianapolis. My dad’s father was a machinist. There was a huge differential between the social aspects of...just in life at that time. It was not unreasonable that my mother’s parents may well have wanted to see if there was a different path she wanted to follow.

TM: Do you know how they met?

JW: At school. There was a school there called Shadeland Avenue School, if I remember correctly. It was a small school—thirty, forty kids in school. Something like that. They would not have been necessarily in the same grade although they were like only about a year apart in age. One of them was born in 1899, the other one was born in 1900. They would have been in the same class or certainly, no question, in a small school everybody knew everybody else. I never did really quite understand...if my grandfather was a machinist and worked on one of the first automobiles that was built in Indianapolis and my mother’s family were in the retail furniture business and politics, there’s still a question: what were they doing going to the Shadeland Avenue School? I don’t know the answer to that. I’ll have to check with my older sister. She does kind of have a better handle on this. I’ll get back to you.

TM: Great. Shadeland Avenue is a high school?

JW: No, it was strictly grade school at the time, I think. It may have been K through 12 for all I know. It's really digging into the history of my mind as to remember even the name of the school.

JoW: That was pretty good.

TM: Sending your mom to Berkeley—that was a big deal. That showed some foresight in her family.

JW: I've always assumed, and may have been wrong, that she went there voluntarily. She had gone to Butler University in Indianapolis for a couple of years and then transferred to the University of California. She rode the train to Berkeley unaccompanied—no other family member with her. I've always given her the credit for just saying "I want to go get my math degree from UC Berkeley" and that would have fit her personality. She was a person who was strong of mind and that's where...we'll be talking about this later at some point...where the conscientious objector question came into my own possible future.

She was a Progressive. The state of Wisconsin is sort of the birthplace of the Progressive Party. Teddy Roosevelt, of course, was the big honcho of the Progressives. This Robert La Follette was notorious and famous for his progressive approach to social issues. If you're not a Methodist you would not really know about this. The Methodist tradition had a very strong history of socially aware consciousness particularly in terms of the abuse of alcohol that was just ubiquitous in Great Britain, which is where the Methodist Church got started by the Wesley brothers. The thing is that alcohol was used as a controlling substance for the employer class over the working class. People were paid in alcohol. When workers were encouraged to consume alcohol and use it as freely as possible, they lost any particular desire to say "I don't think my living and working conditions are really very good." This sort of thing was just unheard of in the 1700s, probably 1800s when this Church was founded. This was really a strong part of my father's philosophical viewpoint. There was a non-pastoral organization—a lay person's organization. Every Church has got its little offshoots. The Catholics have their thing. The Methodist Federation for Social Action was focused on, not just on alcohol, but the whole issue of working conditions, wages, social inequities—which of course we've solved all those problems and no longer are an issue.

When they moved to New Mexico, it was like moving to a new planet. It was such a totally different environment and they really relished it. My father was the preacher in the Methodist Church in Silver City, New Mexico in 1926, roughly, which is when my older sister was born. I've been told—we've never gone in to look—but I've been told that there's a hall of fame of all the preachers who were ever head of the church in Silver City, New Mexico and that his name is up there somewhere. I keep saying I should stop there sometime and see if his picture's still there.

My mother was a person with red hair and my wife will tell you that she really deserved every strand of red hair that she had—when you think of people with red hair and their personalities and so forth. She was the perfect poster person for red-haired people—fair-skinned, burned easily. I've inherited that. She was so opposed to the use of tobacco. I'm not quite sure just exactly where that came from. She would not allow...even the visiting superintendent from the Methodist Church...he would come to see them in their house and she wouldn't let him smoke in the house. If he wanted to smoke, he had to go outside. This was in the 30s and 40s back when smoking was so ubiquitous amongst doctors and every profession. She would not subscribe to magazines that had tobacco advertising in it. If one of the magazines came into the house inadvertently, she would remove the advertisements—tear them out before she put them out on the table in the living room. My wife sometimes wonders "How did I turn

out the way I did?" I tell her things like this and it becomes apparent that I didn't fall that far probably from the tree.

TM: You mentioned an older sister. How many other siblings do you have?

JW: That's it.

TM: Just one older sister?

JW: No, I have two older sisters. They're both older than I am. One is 87. One is 85.

TM: And one was born in Silver City. The other?

JW: In Denver. Methodist preachers traditionally would stay probably a maximum of two or three years at any one church. This was just the way the Church functioned. The Church really got its start by providing...what do they call the preachers that walk?

JoW: Circuit.

JW: Circuit riders. The Methodist Church was notorious for providing circuit riders to be able to reach rural populations who rarely had access to anybody who officially wore the preacher's hat. As that narrowed down a little bit, as the circuit riders became more likely to land in one place and spend a few months—then it was a year, then it was two years—then the district superintendent would shuffle them around from time to time and they would go to different towns. I'm not going to bore you with any more of that because that gets too much into the hierarchy of the Methodist Church.

TM: Remind me again. Where were you born?

JW: I was born in Basin, Wyoming. Look at the map. Here we got New Mexico...Silver City, New Mexico and what is this state? Just north of New Mexico...it's Colorado. That's where Denver, of course, is and he was an associate pastor there. Then he got this church in Wyoming, which is the next one north. The town of Basin was a rural place—did not do that well during the Depression as you might guess. That's where I was born. We stayed there for four years. If I remember correctly, we moved from there on or very close to my fourth birthday. There are three things I can remember from that time. We went out to a ranch and helped some people cutting ice from their pond. They used to cut ice and store it up in the barn and then retrieve it or they would sell it. It was also a source of revenue. The second thing that I remember about being there was that we were in a Franklin automobile—air-cooled—aluminum engine from the mid-20s. We were taking a jaunt across the Big Horn Mountains. It was a rainy, muddy day and we got stuck. This was a moment in memory for a little boy who was less than four years old. The other thing I remember—I don't think I've ever told my wife this—they were rebuilding the street in front of our house. There was a road-grader and some kind of earth moving equipment—1920s vintage—that was working. I was fascinated by it. I stood out in front, leaning on the fence and watching this. Ever since then, if there's some kind of construction going on, I'll stop just to be able to...see? She agrees. It's a curse.

TM: Where did you go from Wyoming?

JW: Back to Colorado. He was moved back to Colorado Springs from Wyoming south. We stayed there a couple of years.

JoW: What about Las Vegas?

JW: Las Vegas was after that. The thing that has hung with me ever since then...you saw the switch sign out front here.

TM: The train switch.

JW: I was in Colorado Springs from the time I was like four to maybe five and a half, roughly. Something like that. Maybe six. Because Las Vegas was the next one, wasn't it?

JoW: Yes.

JW: I might have been seven. Two things I remember from that. One was that I liked to wander around the neighborhood. I remember that there was a railroad not too far from our house. I was a little kid and I had to walk it. Nobody was going to drive me over there. I was curious enough to go into the railroad yard to the roundhouse so I could peek around the corner of the entrance into the roundhouse and see the steam engines and stuff like that. Nobody really threw me out, basically. I think somebody just said "Hey, go home, kid" or something like that. I've been a "foamer" pretty much all my life since then. You know what a foamer is? A foamer is a person—anytime he sees a train or anything on the railroad, he starts foaming at the mouth. Your language has been increased. The other thing that I remember...Colorado Springs is sort of at the base of Pike's Peak. Every New Year's they would set off fireworks from the top of Pike's Peak. It was a big deal. Even though it would be cold, people would be outside watching the fireworks. I would stand there looking for the fireworks and I didn't see any fireworks. And they kept saying "Oh look, look! Don't you see that? It's red. There's a flash!" It wasn't until we moved to Las Vegas...

JoW: New Mexico.

JW: Las Vegas, New Mexico. Yeah. That's the one that's just below Colorado. It was up to... It was in the third grade that a teacher told my parents they thought maybe I should have my eyes checked. Even sitting the front row I was having trouble seeing things on the blackboard. Sure, we went to see the optometrist at the time and got glasses and it was a whole new world. Seeing a tree from twenty feet away was no longer just a green blob, there were individual leaves on trees. Most people don't have any feeling at all about whether or not they want or need glasses. If you're young...and particularly back in those days...being called a "four eyes" you know was... Never bothered me. It was such an illumination to be able to see stuff. And then I could see the fireworks! I don't know what else you want to know about that, but we moved to Las Vegas.

TM: Was your mom teaching? Your dad clearly was... Almost sounds like a military family the way you're traveling so much from place to place to place. Was your mom teaching then or was she just—well "just"—a homemaker. Was she raising you and your older sisters?

JoW: Piano.

JW: Piano? Oh, that's right. She became an accomplished enough piano player that she could teach piano. I don't remember that she taught in Las Vegas, but she may have for sure in Marfa. I'll take you to the next step there. From Las Vegas...we lived there for five years. When I was approximately ten/eleven something like that, we moved to Marfa, Texas and that was during World War II. Sometime in about 1943-44, we moved to Marfa. We spent ten years there. From age ten until age twenty is what

we referred to as the “salad days.” I guess it’s because we were green. That was the term that’s used for sort of the teen years—going from being a pre-teen to being in college. The introduction of all kinds of new and wonderful things occurred during that time. I still think of Marfa as being the town where I grew up. You would never call it a city. It was like a population of 3,500.

TM: Did you meet Jodi there in Marfa?

JW: No. I didn’t meet her until I got into medical school.

TM: Ok.

JW: Where do you want to go from here?

TM: In Marfa...it seems like you were a curious kid. You got basically the free reign of the town at least, to go hang out with the guys in the roundhouse or at least you could look through the door.

JW: That was in Colorado Springs.

TM: Yes. In Marfa then, did you hike, did you camp out? Were you out of doors or indoors? Did your family travel on vacations? Did you do road trips?

JW: During the war gas was rationed, tires were rationed. We did though, manage to make... About every five years my dad would be able to, particularly during the year when things were still rationed, we made one trip back to Indiana. I think there was a health problem in the family so that the Rationing Board gave us extra coupons to make that trip. I’m trying to recall now the sequence of what we did in Marfa.

JoW: You did the summer church camps. Didn’t you? Which is like camping out.

JW: Yeah, you’re right, but that was just like a week. But in answer to your question about how did I wind up in a National Park? Was it because I was such an outrageous camper, hiker, climber any of that kind of stuff? The other thing that my mom instilled, inculcated, introduced me to... She knew about Ansel Adams and the Sierra Club from her time in California when she was going to school. John Muir. Ansel Adams was this young guy who was really active in the Sierra Club. She really kept up with this stuff.

As a sidebar here: In those decades of the 40s and early 50s, that southwestern part of Texas was so isolated from the rest of the world. There was no TV. There was no TV anywhere into the 50s. It took a long time for any TV to become accessible there. Even radio. FM radio hardly existed. AM radio was only good for about 30 miles or so. Music and so forth on those radios would be either Cowboy Western or Mexican Ranchero. There were a couple of 50,000 watt stations that were located right on the border of Mexico and Texas. They advertised the most outrageous things. The one that I used to joke about... This may be apocryphal, but vaguely I recall somebody remarking on the fact that one of the things that there would be these evangelistic preachers. They would get on the air. They reached...a 50,000 watt AM station can go all around the world practically. The carnival type mentality. They would ask for donations and for a donation they would send people an autographed picture of Jesus Christ. This was kind of the level of mentality during that era. The other thing is, my mom had gotten an appetite for opera. I don’t know if that came from her time in Indiana or...

TM: In west Texas?

JW: She came to it. She came to west Texas with an appetite.

TM: Ok, but still.

JW: The Texaco Hour. Texaco had an hour of opera from the opera house in New York City for once a week on Sunday. We had a radio that my mom could find a station that would barely, go in and out, you would hear some things. She invariably would do her best. If the atmospheric conditions were right, it would work. If it was a bad atmospheric day it was no opera.

TM: So this wasn't the 50,000 watt powerhouse across the border. This was her in the night trying to catch the signals from far, far away.

JW: From Albuquerque, Denver, even Chicago and Oklahoma City.

TM: Far away.

JW: There was a station in Tulsa.

TM: Did she ever get to opera in El Paso or in Albuquerque? Did she ever travel for that? Catch the train and go to California?

JW: To the best of my knowledge we never attended any actual official opera presentation. It was the Depression. Methodist preachers didn't make much money. My dad's salary when it was raised from \$3,600 per year to \$4,000 per year that was celebration time. The people in Las Vegas really appreciated him. Once again, we stayed there for at least five years which was beyond the usual for the normal Methodist preacher's time. Then when we moved to Marfa we stayed there for ten years. The District Superintendent was very unhappy with him because the District Superintendent said "I want to move you to so-and-so" and my dad basically said "I really don't want to go there." It was almost like a revolt so I came by that normally, too. My mom knew Ansel Adams—didn't know him personally—but was aware that there was this guy who was taking great pictures and that he was actively involved in the Sierra Club. There was an active conservation movement in Texas even then. The only time that I actually made any kind of a... A question was asked in an English class at SMU. I have no idea what was going on that day. I usually didn't have any idea what was going on. The professor asked a question. I don't know how he got into it. He said "Who's the most active conservationist in the state of Texas?" Crazy. Who would ask a question like that in 1951-52? I said under my breath, because I tried to hide, I said "Roy Bedichek." And the girl sitting in the chair next to me looked at me and said "Where did that come from?" You can still Google his name. He's long since deceased. One of the reasons I remember that is because in Texas, and I guess every state in those years, had different competitions. You would go to the local meets. Then you'd go to the district meets. Then you'd go to the regional meets. If you really were on top of your game, you would go to Austin where there was a state competition. They do it in basketball and football and other things, but you don't hear much about the academic stuff. I don't think they do that much anymore.

TM: Like the debating team.

JW: Debating. I was on the debating team. I was the editor of the paper and had a column. I won several prizes and eventually went to State. My mom was a chaperone on the trip for a group of kids

who went from Marfa down there. She made it a point...there was a gymnasium where stuff was going on and she made it a point to drag me over to this guy and say "I want you to meet Roy Bedichek."

JoW: How do you spell it?

JW: B-e-d-i-c-e-c, I think. Look it up. See what you find.

JoW: I'm unplugged.

JW: No, Online. The iPad. Anyway, that name just stuck for whatever reason. One of the things that you might appreciate is the fact that Marfa is down in the Big Bend area. So you got Big Bend National Park. That was kind of our local national park. We didn't get down there that much because the road wasn't paved. It was a fair distance from Marfa to get down there. That's kind of where I got interested and exposed to the natural world and the world of conservation and the environmentalist movement and so forth.

TM: I'm curious about Marfa in that it actually had a debating team powerhouse enough to go to State. What was so special?

JW: I went into journalism, but to answer your question...

TM: I'm thinking about this rural, very remote little town with a powerhouse school. What was going down there?

JW: I've tried to figure that out myself. When we moved there, there was an Army airbase where they did secondary training for multiple engine bombers. The town population went up to maybe 5,000 or 6,000. The population now is roughly 2,500. When you look at those towns in the southwest of Texas, any town... Marfa was the county seat. Presidio County is the second or third largest county in Texas, covers a huge geographic area, hardly any population. These ranch kids would come and live in town. There was some motivation. We had good teachers. I had good teachers. My mom had high expectations. We had a decent band. There were either 24 or 26 kids in my graduating class from high school. I went on to become a doctor. My best friend, who lived a block or two away from where we lived in Marfa, was a year behind me. He had basically the same kind of class size. He became a doctor. We went to the same school. We roomed together in Dallas. We went to Southwestern Medical School. My mom did actually work as a substitute teacher about two classes behind me. She used to brag on these kids because they were so smart. She just loved teaching them. You know how it is with small groups of kids. We didn't do grade points in those days. You did an average. It was grade numbers. 90 to 100 was an "A". 80 to 90 was a "B". I think my overall high school average was all of like 93 or something like that—"A-minus". This class that she taught had a kid. He was the judge's son. He went to Texas A&M after he graduated from Marfa. Rumor was that he established a record at Texas A&M for the highest grades in the freshman class that stood for years.

JoW: What was he 99 or...?

JW: I don't know what it was? I don't even know if they averaged... how they graded people in those days. I was always a little "Durn! That guy was that much better than me."

TM: When did you start getting interested in medicine? Was this in high school or afterwards?

JW: It's interesting. One of the teachers in the school—I think it was probably Sul Ross State College over in Alpine. I was getting an advanced degree—master's or something of that nature. One of her classes required that she learn how to give aptitude tests. Which was kind of the beginning of the aptitude test revolution. I don't know if my mom went to her and said "I would like to have you give my son an aptitude test." I was told that Miss Dismukes asked my mom if she could. Whoever was lying, I'm not sure. But it was done. I took these tests and I came out with high marks in two areas. One of them was science and the other was social studies. Then the principal at the school told my dad, when I was about a junior, maybe a senior, that of all the kids that he had taught over the years, that I was the one that he thought was the most qualified to go into medicine. I have to tell you, so many people would tell you "I wanted to be whatever since I was five years old." I didn't have a clue what I wanted to do, what I was going to be. Any of that stuff. I loved chemistry. I loved the teacher that taught chemistry. He was a young guy who had been a chemist in the oil fields. He would regale us with these tales. We would have to drive through these little towns through the oil fields driving from Marfa to either San Angelo or, if possibly, all the way to Dallas. Couple hundred miles to buy Levi's or whatever. We'd have to pass through these towns which had the really distinct odor of hydrogen sulfide—the rotten eggs. He would laugh at us and say "When you've been living in that, it's like perfume." We had difficulty understanding his state of mind. We understood it later on because it is something you get used to. Science I loved. With the school, the different classes were limited. We didn't have a physics class. My mother had no faith whatsoever in the guy who taught algebra because he was the coach, too. Coaching was much more important than algebra was. She had me go to summer school in Alpine to take Algebra II. I took algebra I in Marfa. Loved geometry. Other kids in the class would struggle with geometry and to me it was like "Man, this is so great!" Never got into calculus. I flunked algebra in SMU the first time I took it...no trig. I was able to pass algebra ok. Trig was like a foreign language to me. Second time I took it, all of a sudden somebody turned a switch. It was like "Well, of course!" —sines and cosines and all that stuff.

TM: Was college a given for you when you were a junior and senior in high school? Were you like "I'm going to go to college" and your folks were supportive?

JW: I had one sister who developed a neurological disorder when she was about 12 or 13 that was never really diagnosed as to why. It was what's called these days a "movement disorder"—sort of like Parkinson's in having a tremor that prevented her from being able to do fine movements. She would have difficulty writing because she couldn't control the movements of her hand. She had quit riding her bicycle because she couldn't keep her feet on the pedals. She never really learned to drive a car although I think that if my parents had not been overly protective of her she might have eventually been able to become competent. Just never worked into that. My oldest sister and then my older sister both had already were in... The older sister, that was one of the areas that they protected her. She didn't start out going to college. My next sister up went to a school called McMurry. It was a Methodist school in Abilene, Texas. "Ok, my sister is going to school at McMurry. There'll be somebody there I know." Then she transferred to SMU. As a valedictorian you get all kinds of scholarships. The state tuition for a semester was \$25. The tuition at SMU was \$250 per semester. That first semester I got the scholarship for being smart. The rest of the time I was there I got a discounted tuition for being a preacher's kid. Methodist school. Methodist preacher. Methodist preacher's kid. That was one of the perks.

TM: And SMU stands for?

JW: Southern Methodist University.

TM: Thank you. And that's in Dallas?

JW: Yes. You're not old enough to know. During the late 40s... Football in Texas has always been big.

TM: Like basketball in Indiana.

JW: Yes. There was a player at SMU named Doke Walker. He went on to professional sports as it was in the late 40s, which was not exactly comparable to the behemoth of today. SMU was able to produce good football teams and win some titles. That was great fun. I played in the band. The band got to go to the football games and be on the field.

TM: What did you play?

JW: Clarinet. Real mismatch. I no longer play the clarinet. I can guarantee that.

TM: What were you thinking of studying? What was going to be your field in SMU?

JW: Pre-Med.

TM: Where did that land from?

JW: Because the principal had told my dad he thought that I was the ideal person to go into medicine. Then I had that aptitude test which said I had aptitudes in science and social studies—a compassionate person, a person who had strong motivation for equality amongst people, etc. If you want to go into medicine or when you start college you basically take Pre-Med. Pre-Med consists of a certain series of...you've got to take a math, you've got to take biology, you've got take a chemistry. Whatever the prerequisites were. The medical school said. "Ok, what are your scores in these areas?" Pretty structured particularly at that time. SMU was a rich kid's school. Then, it was a poor kid's school because there were all kinds of preacher's kids who made up the classes. It was located in the northern part of Dallas which was where the doctors lived, the people with wealth, the Neiman Marcus crowd. In my freshman class... There was probably a total of 5,000 in SMU, probably 1,000 in the freshman class and that's coming from a school where I was one of 24 in a graduating class. Culture shock to the max. Pre-Med was a stated goal for a couple of hundred kids in that freshman class. All the doctors' kids and the lawyers' kids and the rich kids. Everybody wants to become a doctor. We started with about 200. At the end of four years in SMU there were 30 people who actually were Pre-Med to the point where they were able to apply and get accepted at a medical school somewhere. Half of them had not started at SMU. They had transferred into SMU. So, there were only about 15 people left out of that 200 who were able to make the grade. I was one of them. So was my friend Alan.

This whole conversation really got started on "What was it that made Marfa special—that seemed to raise the level of desire on the part of parents and the community to excel?" My take on it is that Alpine was sort of a similar place. It was a larger town. Great competition with Marfa. Thirty miles apart. It was like blood war, the football games with them. Any community in west Texas that was the county seat was going to have some level of... The people who populate a county seat, there has to be a sheriff, there has to be a judge or two, there has to be a lawyer or three or four, there has to be a couple of doctors, they would have a hospital—the only hospital in the county. There were the basic ingredients of a town in that era that would bring... The people who were able to live in those environments and work and be successful in the work that they were doing, brought with them an expectation on the part

of their kids that they were going to... It wasn't a subject for discussion. You just assumed you were going to go on to college.

TM: Did your parents stay in Marfa after you went to college?

JW: No. As a matter of fact, they finally had to move. After ten years, the hierarchy in the church basically... They actually had a place in Las Cruces, New Mexico and that's where they moved to. At that time I was almost to graduate. That created a potential serious problem because in order to attend school and be admitted to a Texas medical school you had to be a resident of Texas. All of a sudden my parents were no longer residents of Texas. That left me out in the...

TM: Well, you were a resident of Texas.

JW: I was only like 20 years old.

TM: And the resident age was 21?

JW: Yeah. So, it took a little bit of doing. My dad talked to somebody at a political level that apparently made things work. They accepted my plea that I had, as a matter of fact, been a resident of Texas for ten years and intended to continue to be a resident of Texas. That was really true. I really had expected that. But then I got to see the rest of the world.

TM: Where did you apply for medical school?

JW: I applied at Baylor and Southwestern. Those are the only two places that I actually had interviews. I was pretty naïve about stuff. I don't know what it's like now. It's so totally different. Ten years after I went/twenty years after I went, there were dozens of people applying for every position if not hundreds. Once again, I was accepted as an "alternate" to Baylor which I couldn't afford anyway. That was the other fly in the ointment. I couldn't really afford to go to any of the private medical schools. They were just off the table. Whereas with the state school... The State of Texas, early on, really used the oil underneath the ground to provide immensely beneficial educational opportunities for the kids growing up in Texas: University of Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech. The so-called original medical branch for Texas was in Galveston and it was hard to get into. I don't recall whether I even applied to Galveston. May have. I think I got turned down, didn't get to even have an interview. Southwestern was located in Dallas so it was like kind of home turf. The territory was familiar. At that point, this would have been 1955, the tuition to medical school at Southwestern was \$25 a semester. They were embarking on a dramatic increase over a period of several years, rather than just hitting it all at once. The next year it was \$50. When I graduated, I can't remember if the total was \$400 or if it was \$400 a semester. Regardless, it was on an upward trajectory. I have no idea what it is now. It's way more. Look what's happened in Arizona.

TM: Were you working when you were in college during your pre-med and then in med school?

JW: Yes, indeedly. I was a houseboy at a sorority. That's where I started. No, not her sorority. I started working in the cafeteria in the boys' freshman dorm. SMU had a cafeteria in the bottom. I was able to get a job either serving or wiping trays or just doing the kind of things that they have to have—grunt work in the cafeteria. The second year, I think, I was able to, through a friend, get a job as a houseboy at one of the sororities. Then for two years I continued to have a job of some sort and it would amount to

food. Work for food. Had to be there for lunch and dinner. These things didn't pay anything in terms of money that I can recall, but it did always have food. So that was the job.

In the summertime, full bore job to save money. After my freshman year that's when I went to the geophysical crew. I really thought I liked geology—rocks and things. Pre-med... the labs that you had to do and this and that, comparative anatomy, parasitology it was interesting but it wasn't totally engrossing my every thought. I had been close to Big Bend and those areas are notoriously great places for colleges and universities to send their geology people to just because there's so much exposed geology all around. It's still the same thing here. One of the friends that I made in SMU, his dad ran a geophysical company and the exploration for oil...there's still a certain amount of that. They do it in a different way, but the way they did it in those days, they would have these magnetometers that they would stretch out. They would drill a hole in the ground 100 feet deep then they would lay a line of "jugs" as they called them north and south and east and west. Then there would be another hole over here. They would move from hole to hole. Each hole had to be dealt with separately. I got a job with this geophysical company and the first job they put me on was in the panhandle of Texas. I was a driller's helper. I only did that for a week because then they sent me to Roswell, New Mexico where I worked for the rest of the summer as a shooter's helper. The drillers would drop in 20 lbs. of dynamite after they finished drilling the hole. Then the shooting crew would come along and lay out the magnetometers. They had this instrumentation that would recapture the vibrations off of the formations down below. They would set off the dynamite. The shooter would do that. Then the shooter's helper would put together a 20 lb. spring of dynamite. The shooter would poke a hole in it and put a blasting cap—electrical. Then the shooter's helper would push the dynamite down as far we could. Trying to get that down all the way to the bottom of the hole if possible. But frequently the hole would partially fill up.

TM: So the hole was already shot and you were shooting it again? The drillers would leave a 20 lb. charge at the bottom of a 100 foot deep hole. They would shoot that and then you would try to run down another charge as deep as you could get it and do it again?

JW: Yes. Usually we would go down maybe 80 feet. Something like that. What was a trouble maker though was when you shoot dynamite, what are the fumes? The fumes are nitroglycerine fumes. They are basically the same stuff that people with heart conditions put under their tongue when they're having angina. The other thing it does is it makes the blood vessels in the head do stuff. So people tend to get what's called a "powder headache". So I've learned something about powder headaches by being the shooter's helper on a geophysical crew. At the end of that summer... The problem was it was a very difficult terrain. It was through sand dunes, literally. We're not talking about desert like we have here where you can just drive across it. This was in an area that was covered with sand dunes. We had to have a crawler tractor come in and move the trucks because the trucks would break axles and a variety of things. It was kind of a long hot summer in Roswell. I decided at that point sitting in a class and studying and reading books and so forth isn't all that bad. I was really happy to get back in the classroom. The bottom line was, I thought I was tired of having to just do the constant studying. There was homework and tests and all the rest of it. I thought let's see what geology is like. I got all I needed. I was happy being a person who was able to look at the rocks and marvel at the formations that can be formed. All the rest of it is great stuff. I really enjoy talking to people like Wayne Ranney and Michael Collier who is also a great fellow. That gets me to the second year. Third year, I think I worked for a construction company out at White Sands.

TM: You know how to pick 'em!

JW: Mmm hmm. The thing is, White Sands was a federal location.

TM: Summertime in the desert. You can't make it any better than that!

JW: Once you get used to it and you drink lots of fluids and take lots of salt... What made it important for me was that the going rate for just labor off the street to do work anywhere else around there, ranches, farms anything that was not federal government, was \$0.50 an hour. No, I take it back. They made \$1 an hour. The required rate of the contractors out at White Sands, of course all their stuff was bid. They had to use the federal wage scale in making their bids so they recovered their costs, it was like \$3 and something an hour. So that was a very remunerative job to have and I lived at home. I lived at home, worked at White Sands, made good pay and was able to save a very reasonable amount of money.

TM: What were you doing at White Sands? What was the job?

JW: Construction.

TM: Oh, ok. Home construction? House construction? Whatever building—

JW: Things like putting up things that were required for testing missiles. For example, launching pads would be one of them. The block houses. They also had street jobs. Putting up fence. Whatever job they had going. I did that for two summers. Different company because one of them didn't get a contract the second summer. It was another good experience, actually. Really.

TM: This was third year med school?

JW: No.

TM: Third year college because you're pre-med?

JW: Mmm hmm.

TM: So then you went ahead and applied at SMU and got into SMU's med school.

JW: No, it was Southwestern. It's a branch of the University of Texas. It's University of Texas Southwestern Medical School.

TM: But there in Dallas?

JoW: Yes.

JW: Located in Dallas.

TM: So, same town. So you didn't have to change the place where you were staying.

JW: Parkland Memorial Hospital. Where John F. Kennedy was taken when he was shot. Where they took the cops that got shot this time between Baylor and Parkland.

TM: This would have been '55?

JW: '55. I graduated from medical school in '59. The summer of '58, one of my roommates from Southwestern and I got jobs at Mercy Hospital in San Diego. We were externs. We were medical students still. We didn't have the qualifications to be actually treating patients. Hospitals used to have externs. We even made a little money. We were paid something as I recall, but small. Hoping that they would get people like me and Brad to come to the hospital and say "Gee, I'd like to spend another year here and apply for an internship." That was how they fed the internship machine.

JoW: Why did you go to San Diego in the first place?

JW: Just to see the elephant. I had never been to the West Coast, never had seen an ocean. It was an adventure. We went because it was an education related activity. We actually made rounds. We would actually see patients in the hospital and do relatively minor things. Assist in surgery. That was a popular thing to do.

TM: Had you met Jodi by then?

JW: That's where I met her.

TM: In San Diego?

JW: Mmm hmm.

TM: Then the table's going to turn here now to Jodi. How did your parents meet and where did they raise their family? Do you know that story?

JoW: Alright. My father is a career Navy man. He actually grew up in Indiana. Fontanet, Indiana which is near Terre Haute sort of. His family, when he was in the teens, moved to southern California to work in the orchards and do dry land farming. He's the youngest in his family. His oldest brother went to University of California Davis, of all places. He'd actually been a professor there. My Uncle Verne. His name was Verne Hoffmann. That was that guy. His second brother was a farmer-rancher up in the Corning area of California. And he had a sister. Here he was, he was the baby in the family and when it got time for him to decide "What should I be doing?" his brothers said "Join the service." Navy was the preference because it's a federal job. We're talking in the 30s once again, that Depression time. Actually it was early Depression--like in '29. Being in the military, you knew if you made a profession of it you'd always were taken care of. So he became the swabby, swabby sailor. His base was San Diego. My mother grew up in Minnesota and came out when she was a teenager to the San Diego area with her parents. They met with a common friend. My father's...one of his Navy friends knew the girlfriend of my mother and they said "Would you like to go out?" I don't know if they called them double dates then or not, but that's how they met--through common acquaintances. They weren't married in San Diego. They were married up in Long Beach area where a friend was. However, his base of operations as he always shipped out of or came back to was San Diego.

TM: Brothers and sisters?

JoW: I have two older brothers and I'm the youngest in the family. I'm the only girl just like Jim is the youngest boy with two older sisters. Our home was always San Diego although during the war we were moved back to Virginia near Norfolk. I was just two/three years old at that point. Then we moved up to Cambridge, Massachusetts. By then my dad had reached the top of the non-commissions in the Navy which was Chief Petty Officer. But during World War II they needed more officers than they had and

they asked anybody who was in that high rank of the non-commissions if they wanted to go on and do a “sixty day wonder”. It was maybe six months, maybe less of going to school. He went to school, I think it was in Harvard. We were living in the Cambridge area. Then he became, I guess, a lieutenant. I’m trying to think what you start out as. I don’t think you’re an ensign. Every two years he’d get shipped out, too. When you’re in the Navy, you’re gone for two years. You’re in and out of port but you’re on a ship. Then you come back and then you’re on the land doing something for two years. Somewhere between when he got his thing in Cambridge, Massachusetts then we went back to San Diego when I was six years old. We pretty much stayed there until I was in seventh grade. Then he was moved up to Spokane, Washington. My dad was a supply officer. They had big warehouses there inland in Spokane, Washington for all the storage items to keep things dry and away from the ocean and all that.

TM: Sort of like Belmont.

JoW: Right. So we were there at Spokane, Washington for two years. Then came back. That was his land thing. Then he had to be shipped off somewhere. At some point at the very end, he went to Yokosuka, Japan. My mother said “This is the tail end. I’m not moving everything to Japan.” He was over there for six months and then he had retired. He put in 30 years in the Navy. Then I went to college up in the Bay Area for two years.

TM: UC Berkeley or...?

JoW: No, no. It was a girls’ school. It’s the College of Notre Dame in Belmont, California which is on the peninsula below San Francisco. I went two years there and then my roommate and I said let’s go move on. I was in a college Home Ec program, the jack of all trades for the housewife and beyond. University of California at Davis was known for its Home Ec as well as its veterinary school and its viticulture wine-making and things of that sort and food technology. So that’s what Davis really was all about at that time. We decided it would be easier to get into Davis and not try go to UC Berkeley which was hard to get into. Everybody wanted to go to UC Berkeley. We got accepted at Davis. That summer I needed a course to fulfill the requirements to really get into the University of California system. I went to summer school at San Diego State. That summer I got a phone call from a friend of mine I had gone to high school with—a girlfriend. I went to an all-girls school for high school. She was a nurse and she says, “I’m going out with this medical student from Texas” and she says, “He has a friend that needs a date. Do you want to go?” They said they were going to go see Jose Greco, the flamenco dancer. I said “Well, shoot. That sounds like fun. Even if I don’t like the person at least it sounds like a fun thing.” We met as a blind date. Jim was the other guy, the other medical student from Texas.

TM: You weren’t on a blind date. You were on a date with the other guy! He was on a date with the other babe! Wait a minute!

JoW: No, no. [laughter] Brad Miller was the other medical student and he was dating Marie who was my friend the nurse from high school.

TM: So Marie and Brad are dating and Marie says “Hey Jodi, there’s this lonesome guy from Texas who’s in med school.”

JoW: Brad’s friend.

TM: Yeah, Brad’s friend.

JoW: Brad's friend that came out also. I understood it that you came to San Diego...you picked San Diego for doing your externship because Brad had a sister living in San Diego, didn't he?

JW: There was a family connection. There's no question about that. I was with Brad.

JoW: You could have been an extern in Texas if you wanted.

JW: You said "Why did I go to San Diego?" It was because that's where Brad was going. And Brad was going because he had family there.

TM: First impressions of this guy?

JoW: Tall. Had the glasses. I don't want to say the "four eyes effect." His glasses in those days were more like Coke bottle bottoms. Since that time he's had cataract surgery and has new lenses in his eyes so he doesn't have to have those eyeglasses that he had when I first met him when he was 26 years old or thereabouts. No, 24. Something like that. That was my impression. Turns out we didn't get to go. They couldn't get tickets to this flamenco dancer guy so we went to see a movie. It was called "Cowboy" with Jack Lemmon and Glenn Ford. Yes. It was such a good time. He has such a great sense of humor. Had. [laughter] He seemed to be impressed also so he called again.

TM: First impressions?

JW: I thought "Man! Lucked out!" Really enjoyed being with her. I hadn't gone out with anybody. I don't know how long I'd been in San Diego.

JoW: You weren't much of a "ladies man".

JW: There you go.

JoW: You had gone out with other girls, but you weren't one of those that had somebody all the time.

TM: It was the glasses.

JoW: Yeah. He's sort of a shy...

TM: You saw past that.

JoW: Yeah. I did. His personality definitely and his character. I appreciated his respect for me. I had had lots of boyfriends, so I knew. There were some I would never want to go out with again. He was very nice and respectful besides being an interesting person to talk to. The fact that I was a Home Economics major in college which means you take bacteriology, you take food science, nutrition. You take all this different stuff, besides learning how to sew, how to cook and some of these other things. You learn the scientific approach to a lot of this stuff. I felt like I could talk on his wavelength, how he talked and understood things. I think that's what kept us together. Or started it out.

TM: This was 1959?

JoW: '58 we first met. Then he went back to Texas and finished his last year of medical school. I went on to the University of California, Davis and did my junior year. Then when you decided what you were

going to do for internship he chose Sacramento, California because it was close to University of California, Davis where I was.

JW: Actually I looked out on more than one way. I was looking for an internship where the focus was on just really learning and digging in. Medical school and the training programs at that time...there was a huge variability. You could take classes, just like in college. You could take classes that are easy or you could take classes that are hard, but very worthwhile and important. In Dallas the relationship between the medical school and the various hospitals...there were private hospitals, the VA hospital. Parkland Hospital was the one most closely associated with Southwestern—buildings right side-by-side. Parkland was the teaching hospital for Southwestern. Ordinarily they would just assign us by alphabet. The A's went here. The Z's went over here. But, we had the liberty of being able to trade off. If somebody was assigned to go to Baylor which was noted to be a really soft touch—not much night work, it was a private hospital, private paid patients, you weren't dealing with people who were shooting each other or doing mayhem.

TM: Didn't have to deal with the drunks and regular life's issues.

JW: It was sort of the upscale...don't have to work too hard. These guys would not necessarily be going into primary care. They'd be going into pathology, dermatology, night call, and being on call, and so forth. I was going to be a GP. I was going to be a really really good GP. Matter of fact that got me in trouble...not trouble...but it got me on the wrong path with my faculty advisor at Southwestern who was an internationally renowned cardiologist. We sat down. I was so naïve I had no really good clue that the things that really mattered to people who were raised in these environments. I was raised in small towns in a parsonage. Not really sophisticated in some regards. He asked me "What was my goal in going to medical school?" I said, "Well, I want to be the world's best GP." I thought, not too bad. He spent a couple more minutes with me and that was it, never talked to him again after that. I learned since then that the people who are the mentors in these areas/the faculty advisor, he wanted somebody who was interested in research. Who would really be focused on cardiology, who would be writing papers, and getting published, and becoming famous as a result of being associated with this high end thing. I simply had no clue about any of that stuff. I just simply wanted to be prepared. I wanted to have the best background I could possibly have to go out and inflict myself on these poor patients who didn't realize that I didn't have all the answers and would never have all the answers. But I would try and be the best GP that I could. Take care of babies, deliver babies, take care of people with broken bones, all this stuff, and take out appendixes. Do the jack of all trades of medicine.

TM: Was that a common goal of your co-classmates at the time?

JW: No.

TM: Today it seems as though it's a journey toward high-end specialization and there's a real need for GPs and they're just not there because everyone wants to specialize in the high end jobs.

JW: Even in 1955-56, the GP was the lowest man on the totem pole. There were still tons and tons of GPs in practice, but they were getting older. The people coming on board into the world of medicine were really focused on specializing.

TM: So that was happening in the 1950s.

JW: Yeah. This became a family joke. When I got out of medical school and I got into practicing we would go to a gathering of people, not necessarily medical people--lay people--who we would be associating with and socializing with. They would ask, "What does your husband do?" "He's a doctor." "Does he specialize?" "No, he's just a GP." We had several talks about that. I'm not 'just' a GP. I'm a GP. I even got a license plate. I made a license plate--paid for the extra thing that said "JST AGP".

JoW: Yeah. Just a GP. That's finally when it was the joke of the family. Then he felt free enough to put it on a license plate.

JW: Do we still have that license plate somewhere?

JoW: I don't know.

JW: We probably do.

TM: What was it about medicine that you wanted to be the best GP in the world? Why didn't you want to get into neurosurgery? Or why didn't you want to get into orthopedics or sports medicine?

JW: I didn't think I was smart enough to get into neurosurgery.

TM: Mr. 93 point.

JoW: But you did like orthopedics.

JW: Yeah, that's true, if I was going to go into something like that. This is where my upbringing as the son of a Methodist minister who was real socially conscious....the whole business of social equity, the equality of races of people, men, women...and the ability to be engaged and involved and providing whatever. Whether it was emotional support or physical support or correcting whatever my capabilities were. I really enjoyed doing surgery and got pretty good at it. Matter of fact, in one of my training programs at a county hospital in northern California—a place called Oroville, Butte County. There was an older population up there. They were all the time breaking their hips. Of course Medicare...when did Medicare come on board? '53? '63? Doesn't matter. The point is that these people would wind up coming to the county hospital. They didn't have another means of paying for care in a private hospital. They would come to the county hospital. We did a lot of putting pins in hips. It's the sort of thing where they'd say, "What? You're a GP, what are you doing putting pins in hips?" That's the sort of thing that you learn to do simply because there's a lot of them and nobody else was doing them for these people. There was only one orthopedist in Oroville and only two or three over in Chico. They were completely swamped taking care of people/of people that they were taking care of. So we got very good, my partners and I at Butte County hospital.

TM: So Jodi, Jim kind of lays out his vision of being a GP. Based on the morals, if you will, or the values of his parents: egalitarian, very much everybody's in this together, we're going to make sure everybody's going forward. Your dad's career—military, Navy 30 years—did he instill in you/did your mom instill in you the same types of values?

JoW: Yes, I guess so. Being in the Navy, we were never the rich relatives. My mother was not one who was a social climber. She knew how to take an old coat of hers and make a coat for me as a child. She was very good at this sort of thing. Even though she came from a well-to-do family, she was one of these people that liked to march to her own tune. She did. The fact that she married a Navy sailor...her

father was a banker. I have a feeling this was a rebellious thing even though she probably loved my dad as well. She was a smart lady, too. Not quite as crazy as your mother with her red hair. My mother-in-law was a very opinionated lady. My own mother was nice. Religious. Catholic, but religious.

JW: She was kind of a do-gooder, too.

JoW: She was a do-gooder. Right. Yeah.

JW: She would gather clothing to take to kids in Mexico.

JoW: That was much later. Much, much later.

JW: The other thing too, that I was going to remind you, her mom's first teaching job was on a reservation.

JoW: In east San Diego.

JW: Basically what they call a "rancheria" kind of a thing. It wasn't truly a reservation like we think of the Navajo Reservation and Tuba City and stuff like that.

JoW: There's like small Rancherias, pockets of...

JW: I want to continue a train of thought here because it has to do with questions you're asking. There are similarities in our story that will become really apparent as we talk. My dad was a Methodist minister. He was a dedicated committed Protestant with all that that implies. My mom's family had some wealth before the Depression. They became very poor with the Depression. There's all kinds of turmoil there. Her mom came from the banker's family and her dad was sort of a black sheep.

JoW: He was a farmer. He came from a farming family and then was just a sailor. I mean really, just a sailor.

JW: Your mom's father did not attend the wedding.

JoW: That's right. When my mom and dad finally were married up there in Long Beach, her mother went up for the wedding, but grandpa did not go to the wedding. It was a small wedding. I mean, very, very small. No special dress or anything like that. It was 1932.

JW: The other corollary here is that my family did not attend our wedding. My dad, the Methodist minister, and my mom who were pretty dedicated anti-Catholic, in their...that's the way it was back then. The Pope was this evil person who dictated things to people. On and on. All the negative stuff. I pretty much bought into that, too, when I was growing up. I felt like there were issues between Protestants and Catholics that just simply created a real divide. Of course, I met her. We got to really knowing each other and moved on. My dad made a special trip from New Mexico to California just before our wedding to try and talk me out of it.

JoW: We were getting married in the Catholic Church.

JW: Catholic Church or not, they felt strongly. I think that things are quite a bit different now. I shouldn't say that because we don't circulate with the 20-year-olds and the 30-year-olds and this whole issue of marrying outside your religion.

JoW: It's called mixed marriages.

JW: Yeah. The relationship between Jewish people and non-Jewish people. Muslim and Christian, on and on and on. I know that these are huge obstacles to many young people. I have not kept track of how they cope with it. In our family, we chose the course that we wanted to take and we got opposition from my family. She got opposition from her family. Your mom and your dad weren't at our wedding.

JoW: Yes, they were.

JW: Sorry.

JoW: Yes, they were.

JW: And your brother...

JoW: We didn't get opposition from my family because I was theoretically continuing the Catholic...I was still in the Church and he agreed to raise the children Catholic. That's what happened in those days. 1960.

JW: That was part of the drill. Basically, if I had not agreed that I would allow her to raise our children in the...

JoW: It might have been a deal-breaker. I think so at that point. Now I don't care, but then it would have been a deal-breaker.

TM: How did you reconcile that with your mother and father?

JoW: There you go.

JW: They continued to maintain their distance for a long time.

JoW: Finally when we had the first child, Jim II, James Nelson Wurgler II. They started making overtures to come visit and you were welcome to come visit and let us see Jimmy. There were other grandchildren. His middle sister had three or four by then.

JW: Her husband's a Methodist minister too.

JoW: That's an aside.

TM: It plays into this because this is a couple that met and loved each other enough to try to see through their religious baggage and yet you both have a similar vision of the world—of morals and equality.

JoW: And trying to help our fellow man.

JW: I will share this with you. The single most important guiding principle in my life for as long as I can remember has been The Golden Rule. I make jokes about it. The person with the gold makes the rules, but it's "do unto others", period. That is the absolute driving emotion that I have. I even got it translated a little bit. It's been a number of years ago. I was attending a session by a guy who was an emergency medicine specialist and had a magazine. He said two things that stuck with me forever. They were always talking about being sued and this guy stood there in front of us and said, "You can be and probably will be sued for anything." Doctors just have this horrible fear of being sued—being accused of harming people. This is like violating your very principles of life. You might as well go commit suicide. If you have a patient that is so discouraged with your care, now that's me talking, some people just blow it off as being "Well, that's the way it is." You can sue another person for anything. You don't like the color of their hair, you can sue them. Find somebody who will do it. But it doesn't mean they win. It's winning the suit that counts. And the other one was what he called The Golden Rule of Medicine. Which is treat your patients as you would like to be treated. And you would think that that's just natural. All you're doing is just changing a couple of words, but it translates into a totally different aspect of... When you say "do unto others" that's kind of ancient language. But when it comes to how does a doctor treat a patient? I want to treat that patient the way I want anybody who's looking at me would treat me. That goes a long way as far as I'm concerned. The whole business of religion to me... I'm at best an agnostic. They really pushed me hard. I'm not quite able to say I'm an atheist. There's always that little glimmer that there's something out there that I don't know about or never will. When you look at the kind of obstacles that are set up in people's lives. To have to comply with a set of man-made rules. I don't care if it is the Pope who's making the rules.

JoW: Or the Bible.

JW: Or the Bible. Yeah. I'm open to criticism, but my take on this whole issue of taking the Bible literally—that the world is only 6,000 years old. It is so beyond the pale of what is fact. You can have your opinion, but you can't have your own facts. I like that saying too. When I encounter a situation where people say, "The Bible says..." Who cares what the Bible says. But I understand that there's a huge percentage of our population who still does feel...the whole business of "In God We Trust"... Ruling our lives by an archaic false, if you will... False prophets are in the church on the corner.

TM: What was interesting for me as you're talking about a snapshot of basically America in the 1950s and the Protestant and Catholic fight which has a historical really dark side. Today the LGBT community is slowly coming of age and when your daughter brings her girlfriend home and says, "We're getting married." that's sort of today's "my parents didn't come to our wedding." It's interesting just to see how the generations roll forward. But I digress. We are in Sacramento. It's 1960 or so and you're doing your residency.

JW: Yeah. I did my internship. They don't have internships anymore. The internship was the first year of post-graduate training after you're finished medical school. And an internship generally was called a rotating internship. It would be 12 months of rotating through different categories of medicine—a month of pediatrics, a month of internal medicine, a month of...

JoW: Obstetrics.

JW: Yeah, but that was more in the second year. The third year, there were GP residencies. Believe it or not. Even in those days. They're called family practice residencies now. The rotating internship was

supposed to be an exposure to most of the disciplines of medicine. Breaking them down into the specialty areas, specialties and sub-specialties.

TM: And this internship...was this a three year internship?

JW: One year. 12 months. And they're no longer called internships. Now they're called post-graduate I, II and III. The internship is the equivalent of post-graduate I. And for general practice, it was two years of that. The first year, as it was done in Sacramento, was all medicine, psych medicine, internal medicine, and pediatrics. Rather than a month at a time, it would be like maybe two or three months at a time. There would be a period of time spent in the emergency room. They don't even call them emergency rooms anymore. They're emergency departments. The philosophy has changed to a certain degree, too. I did the first year of the internship and one year of the medicine. Then I went to another hospital. Went up to Oroville, Butte County. Every county in California, as a result of the Gold Rush and the evolution of how medical care was provided to the flood of people coming into the state that just continued and continued. The Gold Rush started it, but then it just went on and on and on. So there was a tremendous variety of people who were providing the workforce for the development of California. The people who worked on the farms and ranches and the infrastructure. Health insurance was just kind of really getting underway. Blue Shield/Blue Cross was about the only real true health insurance program in the early 50s, late 50s. Each county, and I think this was state law, had to provide a health care facility of some kind. It consisted, usually, of a hospital of some kind. If a county did not provide it on their piece of ground, they had to have some kind of arrangement with a nearby county that they could provide partial funding. If a person got sick or hurt in a county that didn't have a county hospital they had to be admissible. An adjacent county which had an agreement would have to accept them. There was this hospital in northern California in Butte County which was one of the major...I mean, Oroville—"goldville". It was definitely a Gold Rush type of a community. Butte County Hospital at the time that we were there had a GP residency program and it had a medical director who was an older physician from Canada and three residents. We did everything including pinning hips, taking out appendixes. Fortunately, there was a group of private physicians, mostly from Chico, who came over and basically mentored us. They would do surgery. They would let us do surgery and they would be the person helping us or they would do the surgery and we would assist them. Lots of stuff going on. We took care of the indigent population. That was basically almost exclusively what our population was.

JoW: That's what the Sacramento County Hospital was, too. Where he did his internship.

TM: I forgot to ask you. What year did you then get married?

JoW: 1960.

TM: So when you go to Oroville, you guys are married.

JW: Had a child.

TM: Ok.

JW: And the pay was way better. When I was an intern, even Sacramento was better than the average. It was \$7 a day, \$210 a month. The first year pay was something like maybe \$400 a month. At Butte County it was \$850 a month.

JoW: And you got your housing, too.

JW: And housing.

JoW: Two bedroom house.

JW: Yeah. And utilities. It was a great training experience. It was OJT. But with all the stuff that had gone on before, OJT was reinforcement of the stuff that I had already had my hands on.

TM: Who was your mentor from Canada? You mentioned the head of the residency program.

JW: A guy by the name of Donald Hewitt. He was a fantastic guy. He did his best to try and civilize me. I'll give you an example. The houses that we lived in... There were three houses side-by-side on kind of a circular drive. Then a fourth one. There were three that were almost identical in their structure, the architecture. Then there was another house more typical.

JoW: It was white framed from the original doctor's house when they built the original hospital. In the late 50s, Butte County actually put up a more modern structure and the old hospital is one of those two-story frame buildings that surgery is on the second floor instead of the first floor. It was only used for storage at the time we got there in 1961. That first house, the frame house was the original doctor's house. Not Dr. Hewitt.

JW: But Dr. Hewitt had been actually in practice in Victoria, BC. Which is the ritzy part of British Columbia at the time. He had polio when he was a child. He had a leg that was partially—

JoW: It was shorter than the other.

JW: He'd had surgery and so forth. He wasn't really capable of doing all the stuff that was required of being a card-carrying, everything working GP. He and his wife were both elegant sort of people. They invited us over to their house. They were having some friends over for an evening meal of some kind. I'm almost embarrassed to share this with you because it's so revealing about how awful things were in my mind. "What should we wear?" "Casual" Casual to me was cutoff Levi's.

JoW: You know, with the fringe.

TM: And a tee shirt and a headband.

JoW: No headbands.

JW: Never went the headband route, but that's the only thing that was lacking. Moccasin type shoes. You can just imagine. Of course, they were dressed in "socially acceptable casual"--slacks, polo shirt, collar, loafers. I at least had enough to understand that I should be embarrassed which I was. It also obviously stuck with me, too, that I've been really sensitive. I was so out of place in that environment.

JoW: Social environment.

JW: You don't realize that what being a doctor and being in the medical world in the early 60s. Everybody belonged to a medical society. All the wives belonged to the medical society auxiliary and they had their separate get-togethers. They wore dresses and hats to their social functions and they were expected to do good work.

JoW: You had come from west Texas and even when you were going to medical school you were wearing Levi's and a white tee shirt.

JW: The school that I went to was very much...

JoW: Unsophisticated.

JW: Sort of a rebellious place to a certain degree. Our class was the second class to occupy the building that we were in. They had started the school during World War II, '41/'42, somewhere in there. It was not affiliated with the University of Texas initially, it was strictly just a homegrown Dallas... Funded by the Southwestern Medical School Foundation. Their laboratories/their school were in old Army barracks. You might remember pictures of old Army barracks—the long narrow things. People would talk about the floors. Leg would go through a floor and a variety of things. This new building that we were the second class to attend, was this air-conditioned marvel. These days you have to really hunt. They've built up everything around this building, made it an integral part. Which included two pretty good auditoriums for the classes. Where the entire class would attend just like it is in college, an auditorium that accommodates 100, 150 people on a tiered thing. The people who went to Southwestern generally were people who found it... who might not have been able to go... fair number, I think, would have been hard pressed to have to go to a school that cost more than \$25 a semester.

JoW: Like What? Baylor.

JW: Baylor was already up in the hundreds of dollars a semester. Georgetown, Yale, Harvard--those were not even in our language. So your question was?

TM: Well, my question now is, did Hewitt invite you back?

JoW: Of course.

JW: Yeah.

TM: Did you change your clothes?

JW: I never did that again.

JoW: He didn't wear cutoff Levi's again, only around the pool.

JW: The thing is, it was a small community. He lived the center house. We lived in the house just down the hill from him. The other resident lived in the house just above. There was no way to avoid each other. Socially I would say that she tried to accommodate me in terms of being a proper doctor's wife and going to the auxiliary and participating in the auxiliary. She found it so distasteful. Maybe that's the wrong word.

JoW: University of California Davis did not have sororities and that was another point that my roommate from college and I decided. That we liked this place because you're not forced to have to join a sorority and all the stuff that goes with it. The teas, the putting on airs, the social climbing and all the rest of it and dressing up. The women's auxiliary, for the medical wives, is that same type of thing and that was not my cup of tea, so to speak.

JW: I think she found it to a certain degree, hypocritical.

JoW: That's it. It is. Yeah.

JW: That has been kind of a constant. When she sees me starting to tilt over into something that seems hypocritical, she usually lets me know about it. The other thing that has completely gone unnoticed is the fact that her mom was one of the very first of the really truly hard core natural food addicts.

JoW: She started in the 1930s.

JW: She did not like doctors. She didn't agree with the germ theory.

TM: Isn't this interesting. Here's your mom tearing out the cigarette ads from the newspapers that would sit on the table.

JoW: My mother would have done the same thing.

JW: We were both accustomed to living within a household that had strong opinions that meant way more than what it said in the Bible. I think that's fair to say. Except for the fact that your mom really was a devoted Catholic, church for sure every Sunday. She was a participant and actively engaged. Not a, what I would consider to be...

JoW: She wasn't a Bible pounder.

JW: No. Definitely not that.

JoW: But Catholics aren't. It's...pardon me...it's those Protestants that are. [laughter]

JW: That's true. The whole business of her...both of us having come together and yet having these mutually dysfunctional, in some ways, families that were...

JoW: Our two families probably could have never gotten along if they lived close to each other.

TM: What's interesting for me about this is: her mom was into eating well which is now a big component of medicine. Did she try to impart that to you? Did you catch that at all?

JoW: My mother or me?

TM: Your mother to Jim.

JoW: No, she stayed out of that. She chose not to discuss medicine with him and he chose not to bring it up either. There were a lot of things that we didn't get... My parents are real conservative politically. Whereas we tend to be more in the liberal side of things. Then the religions were two different things even though he was going along nicely. He never brought up religion with her to try to debate them to say "How come you Catholics believe this way when it really...?" They respected each other's differences. They never discussed things politically. No way. There's no way you could.

TM: I just find it interesting that she was saying "Hey, if I eat well I can avoid the doctor." And that's gospel today. If I eat well, I'll be more healthy and my doctor will be happy because I'll be able to keep all kinds of stuff under control—cholesterol, etc. That's really interesting just to put that together. We

have been at this now for a little over two hours and it's been a whole lot of fun in this interview with Jim and Jodi Wurgler. Jim is in his first or second year...first year in residency I suppose under Doc Hewitt. If you're willing I'd like to pick this discussion up again because the Sierras are not far away from Oroville and neither is Yosemite. I can smell it in the woods. I would like to carry this on. If you're willing we will pick this up at a future date.

JoW: I've got to tell you too to bring it up later...that when we were married our honeymoon was camping. We camped for two weeks. So that was really sort of that start of the outdoors.

TM: You didn't tell me that. Where'd you go?

JW: Actually we wound up in British Columbia.

JoW: We were married in Sacramento. We went up the Feather River Canyon into the Reno area, right?

JW: Didn't get to Reno. We stayed in Quincy. We went on 49 so we wound up in Downeyville.

JoW: But then we tried to spend the night in Quincy. We were married on July 4th weekend. When we got to Quincy it was time to find a place to spend the night because we weren't about to camp the very first night. Quincy had this old wooden three-story hotel and they said "There's no room in the regular rooms." And this is a hotel that was built in like 1900s—your old dark, redwood, wood-framed thing. They said the construction workers, since it's the holiday, they're not using the top floor and we can give you a room and the bath's down the hall. That was our honeymoon night. It was a huge room as I remember.

JW: And we had a kitten with us.

JoW: That's the other thing. We took a kitten along too. We've always been cat people. I had acquired this kitten. Actually acquired two but I said, "I'll only take one since we're getting married and we'll get the second one when we get back." But I had to figure out what we were going to do. But we were camping. You put litter into a tub and we had a little Volkswagen bug at the time. He took the backseat out. We had all the sleeping bags and the blowup mattresses. I think all we had was a tarp in case it rained. The starting of a small Coleman stove. I don't think we had our big Coleman at that time.

JW: I think it was the little one that had the gas cartridge.

JoW: Yeah. I think you're right. A pot to boil something in. Who knows? That's how we started out. We'd gone to Army Surplus to get the bags and the blowup mattress and the other stuff. We didn't know about REI at the time even if they were in existence. They probably were up in Seattle but I don't know if they'd made their way down to Berkeley yet.

JW: One further thing to end the note on...just before we got married I had warned her. I said, "If we get married, I'm going to want to do a lot of camping."

JoW: Because the Sierras had really attracted you.

JW: Camping and being outdoors and doing hiking and a variety of things like that. That kind of came with my background.

TM: Did you know you wanted to work rural?

JW: Yeah. I did. We can cover that in the next chapter. It does really have a lot of bearing on... There's rural and then there's rural. I've learned that just living in a lumbering community of 2,500 people was way different than living in Yosemite Valley.

TM: In Oroville.

JW: No Oroville was little bigger. I'm talking about up in the Sierra. Oroville's in the foothills—rice paddies just out of town and orchards. The lumbering industry in the Sierras was still going pretty strong in the 50s and early 60s. There was always an advertisement for one town in particular, a place called Greenville, that I would look at that would say they were always looking for a doctor. We looked at Greenville and in the next chapter I'll tell you what convinced me that I wasn't going to be able to live in that environment.

TM: Thank you so much. This is a Grand Canyon Historical Society oral interview. Today is the 14th of July, 2016. We're in the home of Jim and Jodi Wurgler in Williams, Arizona and that concludes this interview.

JoW: Part I.

TM: Part I.