

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANGELOS PARASKEVAS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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BROOKVILLE, MARYLAND

JUNE 16, 2010

TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins our second session with Dr. Angelos Loukas Paraskevas on June 16th, 2010 in Brookville, Maryland with Sandra Stewart Holyoak. In the previous interview, we were discussing the emergency flights that you took. If you could please just talk a little bit about Hawaii and the time that you were there.

Angelos Paraskevas: Yes, the time I was in Hawaii, of course we were flying everyday being active in Headquarters Squadron and flying so many different ... multiengine planes. ... Rooming with me was an officer named Spike (Carver?) from Utah. He was a fighter pilot, but unfortunately he didn't get into a squadron, so he had very little to do in Hawaii. ... Whenever I had time off we would go out to--I had my Plymouth Coupe--we would go out to Waikiki and spend a day on the beach. In those days Waikiki Beach was so beautiful. The beaches were clean, the ocean was gorgeous, and they had that majestic hotel, the Royal Hawaiian. ... It was at our disposal because wartime there were no tourists. Everything on Hawaii at six PM was blacked out. All the windows in all the homes and all the buildings were painted black. All the lights had to be out ... because it was wartime, and so we would go out there during the daytime and spend our days on Waikiki Beach. ... Both of my brothers pulled into Pearl Harbor, and I spent a day with John on Waikiki, and my brother Paul spent a week with me. ... I think I told you about the time I spent with Paul and Joe Swiderski from my hometown. Isn't that an amazing, the coincidence? I was shocked when I saw him there.

AP: Joe Swiderski was the bartender, at the officer club and he took care of Paul while I was flying, giving him drinks and steaks. Paul put on my officers uniform, he was a seaman. ... I toured Hawaii with my Plymouth; Dole Pineapple Company owned the whole center of Oahu and they were growing pineapples. ... I would drive through the whole pineapple fields going to the northern part of the island. It's famous today ... for surfing. The waves at certain times of the year are monstrous, and they have big tournaments every year. I would drive around the whole island. There was a Polynesian community on the eastern part of the island, and it's a big tourist place today. They have gorgeous waterfalls at the Polynesian colony. Celeste and I went out there after the war. You had to walk through the jungle to see the Falls. We drove around Diamond Head, the inactive volcano is still there--it's a tourist attraction. During the war there was only one street running through Honolulu it was King Street where I enjoyed delicious meals at a Greek restaurant. I a Greek met professor, a horticulturist who took care of all the pineapple fields for the Dole Company. His home was filled with orchids every species known. Flying was very active in Kaneohe Bay. I was flying thirty to forty missions a month. I would fly in the morning, come back, fly in the afternoon, going to Midway, Johnson Island, Canton and Funafuti. ... We covered the whole Pacific. Flying at the fringe of the war zone, we did patrol work, always being alert. Flying seaplanes was enjoyable because it was comfortable. The planes were so huge you can walk around. As I mentioned, Admiral Nimitz used one of our Coronado's--four-engine seaplane--and made it his headquarters. He could walk around; there was a galley and sleeping quarters. He had freedom, plus adequate room to handle his command of the Pacific. As a seaplane pilot you learn fast to appreciate the ocean, it's your dependable friend. When the ocean is blue and clean you know it's peaceful and calm, when the waves are wild you glance at the backwash you can tell the direction of the wind and its velocity, "The Sea will tell". I did most of the navigating, and I would plot it out and adjust the course, change a few degrees just by looking at the ocean. We flew at a thousand feet most of the time. The Pacific is unique, it's just amazing. I flew over Howland Island where Amelia Earhart cracked

up. She made a big mistake by not making contact with the naval ship that was there and never took advantage of it and ran out of gas. The Pacific is just a massive amount of ocean. You must take advantage of all your facilities and you must be very alert at all times and your flights will be comfortable, enjoyable and successful. On August 6, 1945 I was flying to Midway when they broke radio silence and announced they dropped the first Atomic bomb on Japan. I turned to my copilot and said, "The War is over". And then on August 9th they dropped the Second bomb.

SH: They announced the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan?

AP: They broke radio silence and announced it. ... We always sent coded messages. The radio operators sent coded messages, and when they broke radio silence, you know, it sounded strange, and told us they dropped an atomic bomb ... The war was coming to a close, and regardless of the situation around the world, I was still flying. I was flying actively, never on the ground, and so came the end of the war and in our squadron--typical--everybody wanted to go home. The war was over. They're not going to be in the Navy, they wanted to go home, and those that were going to stay, well, that's going to be their routine. The war ended in September 1945.

SH: What was the reaction among the troops other than wanting to go home? Was there a huge celebration?

AP: In Honolulu they marched up and down the streets. I mean, they couldn't be happier. In San Francisco they were wild. My brother Paul celebrated with all of them. He spent eighteen months out there in the Pacific in all the invasions of the islands. We had a multiengine squadron, the pilots were more reserved. They're not fighter pilots, and here it was September, and they were all planning on going home. Many of them were married and they were very pleased that the war was over, and they couldn't wait to go. As I told you, I went to Funafuti, and we took back a plane full of sailors because they wanted to go home. The war was over, and they didn't want to wait for another boat thirty days later; we took them home. The pilots in our squadron, their minds were made up, and I knew which ones were career pilots, and I was flying with them all the time. We were still flying our full schedule. We were still going all over the Pacific, and I was still flying very actively, I was in the planes all the time. I was never on the ground. My whole time in Kaneohe Bay, I never spent a full day in the pilot's ready room. ... I was in the air. Now I had to make a decision. What am I going to do? Here it was September, I wanted to go to college, and it was too late. By the time I got back to the States, school would have started. I made up my mind to stay in an extra year. ... Do I like the military or not? After all, I graduated high school 1941, the war started, and here it is 1945, going on 1946. I lost those five years. ... Should I make it a career or not, the two major pilots I was flying with, they were going to stay in the Navy completely, make it a career, and then, the pilots were leaving left and right, and the ones that were left behind were doing all the flying. I stayed that whole year, , by the time June of the next year came, my mind was made up. The peacetime Navy wasn't for me, it wasn't active enough. Yes, I could see a trend. They're sitting on the ground. ... I had too much energy at that time, I wanted to keep moving. I said, "No, I'm getting out of the Navy, I'm going to go to college." I caught a Hospital ship leaving Pearl Harbor; I went to San Francisco.

SH: Why a hospital ship?

AP: They put you aboard anything that was available. I could have possibly taken a plane over there, but thabutt's flying three thousand miles over the ocean is not ideal. You know, it was amazing. When I went to Hawaii, you couldn't keep me on the ground, and as I said, when I had spare time I went to the fighter squadron. I flew the Wildcat, flew the Hellcat fighter planes, and then, they got the Bearcat, and I was going to fly the Bearcat. ... There was the Wildcat, the Hellcat, and now they came out with the Bearcat, the F8F. I said, "It's going to be very unusual for a multiengine pilot to fly all three of the 'Cats." I went to the flight line, here it was coming up June, I was going home, and I talked to the squadron commander, and I said, "You know, I flew the Wildcat and Hellcat, I'm going to fly that Bearcat." He said, "Okay, get your parachute, and I'll give you a rundown on the panel and all the new equipment." I sat in the cockpit, started the engine, he gave me a go over, and I was ready to call the tower, and I shut the engine off, and I got out. ... My attitude changed. I'm going home. It's amazing. Before you couldn't keep me on the ground, now I said, "I don't belong in that plane anymore," it was a change of attitude. I'm going home, and I shut the engine off and walked away. Yes, it's typical in a way; all the servicemen must have had the same feeling. They put you aboard anything that's available, and I went on a hospital ship and pulled into San Francisco, I stayed with the pilot friend of mine in San Francisco for three or four days, and then I caught the train home. While in the service I traveled 15,000 miles on the train North, South, East, and West. I saw America the right way, it was truly beautiful. I came back home. I decided to go to Rutgers. I signed up for Rutgers.

SH: Why did you pick Rutgers?

AP: It was the State University. I was living at home, and I was going to commute back and forth. I wasn't going to go away to school. I felt very comfortable after being away in the service.

SH: What did you do with the Plymouth?

AP: Before I left Hawaii I sold my Plymouth. Rutgers was close. My mother and father moved into the new home.

SH: You and your brothers helped them get into the new home, is that correct?

AP: ... In 1945, my mother wrote a letter and said, "We're going to buy a new home, and we need a little more money for a down payment." My father was working now, the Depression was over, and now of course the war is over, and the economy was good, but they were buying a better home, a bigger home, and it cost more money. She said, "We need a little more money, can you help us?" John wrote me a letter concerning the money. All during the war I was buying government bonds ... because I'm going to need that to go to college. I was a millionaire; millions of miles in the air, millionaire on the ground. I checked my portfolio and I cashed all my bonds in and John did the same thing, and they bought the house. I said to myself, "Well, how am I going to go to college now? My bonds are gone," and lo and behold, the GI Bill came out. So, I went to college on the GI Bill. ... I had so much time in service; I enlisted in 1942 and got out in '46. I had four years of service and all that credit. ... When I signed up for the GI Bill, I had enough for college and almost three years in medical school on the GI Bill.

I had to come up with a little money. My brother John, went into the Merchant Marine Academy in 1939 and into the Navy during the war. As commander aboard an LSD (Landing Ship Dock) Mr. Stewart President of Baker Castor Oil told John, "You go to school and graduate. I'll give you a job". John was caddying for Mr. Stewart at the time. After the war Mr. Stewart gave John the job. He met Audrey his wife there and married. ... After the war Johnny donated ten thousand dollars to the Merchant Marine Academy in his honor. I had the GI Bill; I registered for premed at Rutgers.

SH: Were you commuting?

AP: Yes, I was going to commute from Roselle. I took the train back and forth. It was so close, and very convenient. ... I'm flying in the Naval Reserve now. When I went directly to the Navy, and I was assigned to a squadron in Floyd Bennett Field in New York, and I was flying once a month--weekends--, I went for my weekend at Floyd Bennett Field in September, and Commander Proctor says, "They want two PBY pilots. ... President Chiang Kai-shek wants two PBY pilots." I said, "What for?" He said, "He wanted two PBY pilots for China." He wanted to hire them. "He's going to pay very well," and I said, "I'm a PBY pilot. I was a flight commander." "Where do I go?" He said, "Go to New York to the Chinese delegate in New York and talk to them. See what they say." I hopped over to New York City. I'm talking to the delegates, the Chinese delegates, and they said, "Yes, President Chiang Kai-shek wants to hire two PBY pilots," and I said, "I'm a PBY pilot." "Fine." He said, "There are two of you. The other fellow was McGowen. I knew him from Elizabeth, New Jersey, and he was a PBY pilot. "We hired him." I spent all day with them, and they said, "We'll hire you too. You're the two pilots. We're going to send McGowen out right now, and then within a month you're going to go to China." I go back to Rutgers, I'm going to school, I have my bags packed, and I'm ready to go. I go to Floyd Bennett Field for a weekend of flying, and Commander Proctor says, "Did you hear about that pilot in China?" I said, "No, what happened?" "Well," he says, "your duties were to fly all the gold out of China before the communists took over for President Chiang Kai-shek. You had to land in rivers and any place to load the gold on, and either fly it to Taiwan or one of the islands in the southwest Pacific, come back, and get more gold and more gold, and the communists captured him and put him in jail." I said, "Where were they landing?" He said, "In any river, any ocean," and the water in China, it was full of junk, there were logs and cans and all. I said, "How did he land in that water?" ... Proctor said, "I don't know how he landed in that water," because ... you could rapture the hull, and you would sink. The water had to be cleansed of all that stuff. It wasn't a regular base. He said, "Wherever they went with the gold, you had to go, and that's it." You would fly all the gold out, I said, "No, I'm not going," and I stayed. "I'm going into medicine," and I didn't go back, and I talked to the delegate in New York, and they said, "We don't blame you, that's what you were going to do." I said, "You didn't tell me that when I signed up for the job." Anyway, that would have been exciting. McGowen got out of jail in a year. In 1949, the Chinese Communists took control of all of mainland China, leading the Chinese Nationalists and President Chiang Kai-shek to retreat to southern China. I went ahead with medicine, and taking premed at Rutgers. In 1946 we were veterans, the younger ones just out of high school wore beanies, but not the veterans, they would never tolerate it. I played 150 pound football for one year and quit all sports, devoting my time to my premed studies. Getting into medical school was very challenging. 4,000 applicants for each school for a class of 100!

SH: Was there a place where the veterans would sit?

AP: No we were all part of the same class. I didn't live on campus. ... I commuted back and forth. My brother Paul and I were both attending Rutgers; he was one year behind me in engineering. At Rutgers I met Dr. Waksman who discovered streptomycin, and amazingly, when I was president of the class at Georgetown Medical School, Dean Foster invited me to a big cocktail party that they were throwing at the university for Sir Alexander Fleming who discovered penicillin. I met both of them. ... When I was president of the class, I was in my tuxedo all the time. Dean Foster was the nicest dean you could ever meet, and the Jesuits ran Georgetown. The Jesuits gave up the deanship, and he was the first lay dean. They couldn't have chosen a better dean.

Flying in the naval reserves I flew to Florida and on the way home I had engine trouble and landed at Cherry Point, Virginia. They finally repaired my plane and I lost a day or two getting back and I missed my final exams at Rutgers. Each of the professors called me in and each gave me an oral exam in his office. The most interesting final was with my English professor. He was so elated because he just received his Doctorate in English and wanted me to read his thesis that qualified him. I read it and he gave me an A without an exam. ... I played 150 pound football in my freshmen year and then gave that up to concentrate on getting into medical school. A classmate of mine said, "You're going to be a doctor? You're wasting your time. Did you read the papers? There are Four to five thousand applications for every one hundred students." I never hesitated and I continued in pre-med.

SH: Do you remember his name?

AP: No, I forgot his name. ... I said, "No, I'm going to still pursue it. I'll try it." I was just persistent. Now it came to my junior year. and I applied to six different schools, and the trouble was New Jersey didn't have a medical school. I applied to Cornell, and Cornell says, "Your state doesn't have a medical school. ... It's a little mark against you." He said, "I'm being honest with you here," because I was a veteran. He said, "I'm being honest with you, "New Jersey should get a medical school, and then you'd have a better chance." I applied to six schools including Georgetown. Finally, I get a letter from Georgetown that, "Your application was accepted right now, and you have to come down for an interview." There were fifty of us sitting there. ... The librarian was so good, she calmed us all down because everyone was so nervous. You're going to be interviewed by the staff, the medical staff.

SH: Did you go in uniform?

AP: I went in uniform. My dress blues. I was an officer in the navy. All my ribbons and my "Wings of Gold" signifying I was a Naval Pilot.

SH: Did you?

AP: Yes. What I did, I was in the Reserves, I put on my dress blue uniform, white hat. I was dressed up, and I went to Floyd Bennett Field, I got a Beechcraft, a twin-engine plane. ... I got in the cockpit, and I flew it down by myself to Anacostia, the airport in Washington, D.C., and I

took the bus and I got off right in front of the Medical school at Georgetown University, and I looked at the school, first time I saw it. I looked at it, and I said, "My Lord, look at this place." ... It's gorgeous! ... They called me for the interview, and they called us six at a time, and the whole staff was there, the medical staff, the dean and everyone, Jesuits and all, and they questioned us; I was the sixth one in line. Number one, they asked the same question all the way down the line, and the next thing you know, I got a letter and it said, "You are accepted for medical school." I said, "Oh, my." I'm waiting. ... They sent me the acceptance letter in February, "We'll send you a letter about when to start classes." April came no letter, May came no letter. I hopped in an airplane again, put on my blue uniform, flew down to Anacostia, went over to the medical school, and I said, "Mr. Simmons," I didn't get a letter about school. you're supposed to give me instructions." He said, "The letters all went out." . He said, "I'll have to look at your application, and I'll call you." I went back home, got no call, got no letter. I hopped again on a plane and went down to Georgetown, and talked to Mr. Simmons. He said, "You didn't get your letter? I said, "No." He said, "I don't know what's going on." I flew down six times. The sixth time he said, "Mr. Paraskevas, you know what the problem is? They lost your application. I just found it." ... Now, it was June. He said, "The class is full. If someone drops out, we'll put you in. Otherwise, you're in the 1951 class." I received my letter of acceptance for the Class of 1951, accepting 128 medical students.

SH: Before we go to medical school, can we talk about your experience at Rutgers?

AP: I started school playing 150 pound football my first year, we had a good season. We won a lot of games. I gave up football; classes were more important. While I was in service, I was always studying, being a pilot and going through the eighteen months of cadet training, we had extensive classes. I lost a little bit of touch, but I caught on fast. I was getting back at it again. I probably had to study harder than most of them, but I continued on through Rutgers. In essence my education was one extended continuum from high school right through medical school.

SH: Did you have to take ROTC?

AP: No. They had ROTC, but I was in the service. I was getting good marks on my studies.

SH: Did you have to work after school?

AP: No, I did not work. I was flying in the naval reserves at Floyd Bennett Field, New York and I served in the military during the summer months.

SH: What was your summer job?

AP: ... During the summer Noel Cram and I painted house numbers on the curb charging fifty cents a number. We painted a white block and stenciled the house number in the center. We were doing well but knocking on doors and explaining our policies took too long. "Let's paint the signs, put an envelope in the mailbox, and ask for a donation." They gave us fifty cents, a dollar, and some of them said, "What are you doing painting signs? Go to work." All summer in the morning, we painted signs, and in the afternoon, we played golf. I played golf all my life. Then, halfway through the summer, suddenly the fire department came up, the town fire

department in Roselle said, "What are you doing painting signs on the curbs?" I said, "Well, it was just something we decided to do. He said, "Well, do you have a permit?" "No, we don't have a permit." He says, "Stop it." They cut us off, and what did they do? The firemen were painting them. They took over the business from us. At that time I was going into school at Rutgers. I enjoyed Rutgers a very good school. They had a beautiful quadrangle with all the classes in walking distance. I was taking biology, a pre-med course.

I commuted to school. Got off the train in New Brunswick, walked to the campus, went to class and went home, it was so convenient.

SH: Do you remember your graduation at all?

AP: With all the veterans going to college classes expanded to the other side of the Raritan River, the Professors held their classes in huge halls..

SH: Did your parents come down for your graduation?

AP: Yes, oh yes. ... The classes were so large we had graduation, at the Rutgers stadium outdoors. I enjoyed that degree very much.

SH: You had looked forward to going to college.

AP: Oh, yes. Well, as I said, when I was in high school, I was so depressed because of the Depression years and not being able to go college. Pearl Harbor turned my life around: Naval cadet, aviation program, Naval pilot (officer), Pacific theater pilot, World War Two, Rutgers University, Georgetown School of Medicine, Residency in obstetrics and gynecology, marriage and family, private practice, OBGYN and retirement. One continuum of satisfaction. You cannot imagine the feeling that penetrated me from December 7, 1941 on. Time went by so beautifully. 1958, when I was in residency, in OBGYN at D.C. General in Georgetown in Washington, D.C., I got married. Celeste and I had two children. They were both born in December, a year apart. We were living in Anacostia on practically nothing. I completed my residency in OB-GYN and moved to New Jersey to being a practice.

SH: How did you meet your wife?

AP: When I was going to medical school, I finished my first year. In 1952 I was working in New York and coming home in the evening I was walking past my next door neighbor sitting on the stoop. We struck up a conversation and from that point on it never ended; a love story to this day. She moved to Virginia while I was a resident in OB-GYN at Georgetown and D.C. General Hospital. We married and we had two children a year apart, 1958 and 1959. I set up a practice in OB-GYN at 1005 Green Street, Iselin New Jersey with my office downstairs.

AP: We had Leslie and John, and I had my office downstairs, and one day I was seeing a patient. I went to answer the telephone, and the patient in the examining room was calling me, "Dr. Paraskevas." I came in, "What's the matter?" She said, "There's water dripping on me." I look at the ceiling, there's water. I go upstairs, and Johnny was just two years old, he got on a

chair and opened the faucet in the kitchen and flooded the kitchen and water was dripping on her belly. I went upstairs and said, "Johnny, what are you doing?" Another time it was winter, and there was snow on the ground, and then, I get a telephone call, and they said, "Dr. Paraskevas, your two children are in their pajamas outside. One is on the roof of your car with the snow, and the other one is walking in the snow. They're out there, both in the snow." They walked out of the house. Leslie used to sit on the stoop, the office was downstairs, the patient would come in, and she'd sit down and greet them. She heard me on the phone taking to patients going to labor, bleeding, in pain. When the patients were coming in, she says, "Why are you seeing my father?" and the patient would start to talking to her. "Are you bleeding? Are you having pain?" ... I was talking about a girl in labor. ... I went to New York one time. Celeste and I were shopping on Canal Street and I had her in my arms, and she was talking to the ladies in the back, and she says, "How are you? Do you go to the doctor?" "Yes, I go to the doctor." "Why do you go? Are you bleeding?" The lady turned around and came at me, "Are you listening to what your daughter is saying to me?" I said, "I'm a gynecologist." She says, "Oh." I said, "She hears me on the telephone all the time." We lived in that house, and in less than two years, we moved out, and I made the whole building into my office. A friend of mine Lou Luccarelli paneled the walls. I had the most modern office around. The office was beautiful. Lou, a carpenter made gorgeous new office. Celeste was always moving and decorating, moving and decorating. We moved ten times.

SH: Really?

AP: [laughter] Celeste was always decorating, moving, and we moved ten times. You can't believe what we did. We moved from the office, to Colonia; we bought a home on the lake. Celeste didn't like that home. She would have preferred another, older. She loved antiques and loved to decorate with antiques, and we never decorated the house. We had a rec room downstairs, and that's the only room that was decorated and the upstairs was empty. We entertained, they came in to the rec room downstairs, a fireplace, the lake, gorgeous view. Christmas, we're going to give a party. Celeste was going to give a party for the kids. Their birthdays were both in December. John was on December 12th and Leslie on December 26th. The living room was huge and empty. The people came in with their kids, and they said, "Celeste, you know, I give you credit." They said, "You're giving this big party and you moved all the furniture from the room," and Celeste says, "Yes, I did." She didn't tell them that we had no furniture. ... She went out and bought a piano and antiques it white. A Baby Grand, and put it in the picture window and put the drapes up, and they thought the room from the outside was decorated, see. They said, "How unique Celeste. You moved all the furniture for our party." We moved out of that home. I was playing golf with some friends of mine at the Plainfield Country Club. I came to the sixteenth hole, and there's a big sign up there, "House for Sale." I looked over there, I see this brick building. So, I finished golf, I take the car, I ride around, I go over to this area, went over a little hill. I saw this beautiful Georgian-type home, wrought iron balcony. It looks like it came from New Orleans. It had five acres. I looked in the bay windows. They had brand new parquet floors, wooden floors. I looked around I said, "This is gorgeous home." I went home and I said, "Honey, ... I saw a home. I was playing golf, and there's a sign up there for sale." I said, "Get in the car." We took the car and drove, and there was a little hill. I got on top of the hill, and there's the house about five hundred yards down, and she looked at it, and she says, "Buy it." I said, "Honey, you didn't look at it." ... She says, "Buy

it. I know what's inside." So, I forced her to go down. So, we drove up, got out of the car, we looked in the bay windows, went all around. She says, "Buy it." I called the seller and we went out, and we bought that house. ... I went into practice in 1960, and we're buying this house, it's 1965. I went to the bank sat down and talked and they gave me a mortgage immediately especially if you were a doctor. Dealing with the banks at that time was unbelievable. We bought that house, and Celeste took off. She was buying antiques and the house was just gorgeous. In no time we put a beautiful, decorative pool in the back. We had a brick patio, and we had a little awning coming off the sun porch. It had a big living room with a fireplace, full maid quarters, with a bathroom, a bedroom, and a little living room, and Celeste went down to Mississippi, got this big black lady, Nora and she stayed with us until she died. She brought up Leslie and John. We could travel around the world, because we always had Nora. Wayne and Rob were going away to school.

SH: Was Celeste from Mississippi?

AP: Mississippi, yes, she was from ... Delta City, a town of six hundred people. There's only one crossroad, it was all cotton country. Her father had big cotton fields, and everybody had cotton fields, and all the Negroes would do all the cotton picking and there were only six hundred people in that town. Her father was the big shot. He was the councilman; he was everything. He didn't run for mayor, but he told you who would run for mayor. When we got married, the first Christmas came along, and Celeste bought a lot of Christmas gifts, and ... we went for Christmas to Mississippi. I met her family for the first time.

SH: Was that the first time you met her family after you were married?

AP: Yes, we were married in Washington, D.C. I couldn't travel. ... I was a resident OB-GYN and I couldn't travel anywhere, I couldn't leave. She came from a family of fourteen.

SH: Oh, my.

AP: Yes, she's the only one living now, yes, fourteen a big family, and living in the fields where she was brought up. There was only one school there. ... There was a black fellow named Dick. He did all the chores for them. Her mother and father eloped; she was fifteen, and he was seventeen. They took a horse and buggy and eloped and got married. We went down there and her sisters would come over, fourteen of them. One brother was killed in the war, and the others were living throughout Mississippi. All of them stayed in Mississippi. Celeste was the only one that left Mississippi, and I would enjoy going down there. We went down there the first Christmas, and we had all these gifts; it was cold, freezing. Every morning I'd wake up and hear creaking. I said, "Celeste, it's five o'clock in the morning. What's going on? I hear a creaking sound." She says, "I know what it is." Her mother had six rocking chairs in the living room, and all the neighbors would come in five o'clock in the morning, they'd sit and chat, and they'd sit in the rocking chairs, and they'd rock, but they found out there was a doctor in town. They had no doctor, so now they came in, and they all wanted their blood pressure and heart listened to. Every morning the rocking chairs are rocking. Five o'clock in the morning I would get up and hold a clinic, and Celeste got up and said, "Now listen." There were ... ten or twelve of them in the living room at that time talking to her mother, "Now listen. My husband is here on vacation.

He'll check your blood pressure and heart only once, but they but they kept coming back, you couldn't stop them. They were there every morning. My mother-in-law was making them breakfast. Every morning, "Creak, creak, creak," the rocking chairs. Christmas came and Celeste got worried. It was the day before Christmas, and the Christmas gifts didn't arrive, she had about twelve boxes of gifts. She says, "You know, I'm going to tell my father, Bub." ... It was Christmas Eve, and she said, "The gifts didn't come." Bub says--he called her, CC. "CC, doggone it, you've been here so many days. Why didn't you tell me that you had gifts coming?" He got in that car, went down to that post office and got hold of the postmaster. ... It was eight, nine o'clock at night, it's Christmas Eve, went down to the post office, went through the mail, and got all those boxes and brought them in. That's called "country living." All the gifts were there. I wake up the next morning, and I want to take a shower and shave. I said, "Bub, there's no water." Down South in the cotton fields, the land is very low, and it will flood easily. All the pipes are just under the ground a few inches and it got so cold, the pipes froze. What the people did, they turned all the faucets on waiting for the water to come on, and when they turned all the faucets on, there was no pressure. ... In the big tower, the water pressure dropped. Bub says, "I know what the problem is." He went downtown, to turn all the water off. I'm not saying anything. The phone is ringing and Bob was getting on the phone. He says, "Ah, the water will be on soon, the water will be on soon." He was the water commissioner. He went down and shut the water off to all the houses until I took a shower and shaved because everybody turned the water on, I had no pressure. He said, "Are you finished Doctor?" I said, "Yes," and he turned the water back on. That's small town living. I'll never forget that. We had a gorgeous Christmas. All the relatives came; they wanted to know who I was, marrying this girl from the south. Celeste was very active, she loved antiques. We purchased a Georgian type of home and decorated it with all antiques. Celeste threw big parties, everyone wanted to be invited.

SH: Oh, really?

AP: ... The first thing that we put in was a beautiful swimming pool with a waterfall. We had parties all the time. I invited all the nurses at the hospital. I would hire a band. We had a big patio, they were dancing and swimming, we had plenty of food. Christmas time, we always had a big party. I would invite all the doctors. ... They said, "Did you get an invitation to the Paraskevas' annual cocktail party?" ... We met a multimillionaire from New York. His name was Harry. He owned the Gibson Card Company. He lived 57th Street on the thirty-fifth floor overlooking Central Park, and he would invite us to New York all the time because I was a pilot, and he loved to fly. ... He was in a wheelchair with arthritis, and he couldn't fly. He wanted to be a pilot all his life. He always wanted me to talk to him and we would go over to New York, and he would have big cocktail parties; a wonderful man. He came to our Inman Avenue home, that Georgian-type home, in a limousine. Celeste invited him for dinner, he and his wife. He walks into the front door, and Celeste greeted him barefooted. She was from the South, she always went barefooted. He looked, there was a box on the floor. ... He looks at this box, ... and I said, "You're looking at that box." He says, "Yes." I said, "That's a gift I gave to Celeste." We're redecorating the guest bathroom. We went to New York, and we found this French artistic sink, a pedestal and a toilet, and it looked so beautiful. Celeste bought it and it's in that box." He said, "Well, why is it sitting in the box on the floor?" I said, "it's a French toilet, and it doesn't match the pipes in our bathroom, because this is American plumbing. That's Celeste's gift, Christmas gift." He said, "A toilet?" I said, "Yes." He said, "A toilet is her Christmas gift?"

That's the way Celeste was. It just sat there. I'll never forget that. He came in, and Celeste had silverware, sterling silver. She had sterling silver plates; she had sterling silver glass goblets with all the trim around; it was a picture. He looked at that, and he said, "Celeste, it's beautiful." ... She served a dinner, and she baked a pecan pie, and she burned it. I said, "Honey, I'll go down, I'll get some more pecans, and we'll make another pie." She said, "No, no, leave it alone, I'll take care of it." We finished dinner, and now, we're waiting. What happened to the pecan pie? ... She had this big goblet, sterling silver crystal with whipped cream and something else in there. She took the pecan pie, crumbled it up, mixed it with whipped cream, put it into the goblet, and he's eating it, and he says, "Celeste, what is that?" She said, "That's heavenly hash." I looked at her, and it tasted so good. I said, "Honey, I want more," and she kept kicking me. I said, "Honey, I want more." She said, "Quiet, I don't have any more. Well, Harry never forgot that. ... He invited us to cocktail parties in New York all the time, all these prominent people. He always talked about that party, he couldn't believe it. He said, "Guess what? He bought Celeste a toilet for a Christmas gift. We enjoyed that house so much. It was right on the golf course, the sixteenth hole. The kids were eight and nine years old, and they would walk to the pool, and Johnny and Leslie were on the swimming team. Every day they had to practice, and they walked right across the golf course to the pool, and they would have something to eat over there, and they'd come home later on. Johnny was eight years old and swam for the country club, and then, we went to Rutgers University, and they had the state championship swimming, all ages, and Johnny won the eight year old state championship in swimming. He swam twenty-five yards. Raynell, Celeste's cousin from Mississippi, came to the swimming meet, and she was watching Johnny swim, and she said, "Johnny, you're coming up for air too much. You take a stroke, you breathe, you take a stroke, you breathe." She said, "Cut it down. Maybe every third stroke come up for air, because that kid swimming next to you is going to beat you." They had to swim twenty-five yards. Johnny jumped in the pool, never came up for air, and when he hit the finish line, by one inch he beat the other kid, and won the state championship. Then Celeste got the bright idea--she was from the South. "We're going to live down South." Now, here I was in practice, I had a big practice, I was delivering 250 babies a year. I delivered ten thousand babies in my lifetime, because when I was in the residency at Georgetown, we were delivering seven thousand babies a year. Celeste decided to move down South to Lake Jackson, Texas. I said, "Honey, are you serious?" "Yes." I made all these announcements, we're moving now, we bought a home in Lake Jackson, and we're going to move to Texas

SH: Lake Jackson in Texas?

AP: In Texas. ... Right on the water, on the ocean, on the Caribbean, and what a big switch it is. ... We made all the arrangements. I got someone to take over my practice. Everybody couldn't believe it. It was such a big practice. You've been here since 1960, and here it is 1969, you're moving to Texas. We moved the whole house, took two days for to load the truck. I stayed home because I wasn't ready to leave. All I had was a bed, the whole house was empty, a bed that's all. Celeste took off. She's down in Texas, Lake Jackson. Every two weeks, I would fly down there, Friday night, come back Sunday night. ... Take a plane to Houston, Celeste would meet me, and I'll be driving down. She had a small car, but it was a modern one, I forget the name of it, but it was a good looking car. She would pick me up at the airport, and I would drive, and I'm going fifty-five, sixty miles an hour, and she says, "You're going too slow." ... Lake Jackson was fifty miles south of Houston, straight highway. She said, "You're going too

slowly. Finally after about ten, fifteen miles or so, she said, "Get out of that seat." She got in there, ninety miles an hour. Zoom! We got to Lake Jackson, and she said, "You're in Texas." She said, "You're not in New Jersey." She says, "Drive that car." Johnny and Leslie are on the swimming team, Johnny is nine years old, and Leslie was ten. Believe it or not, Lake Jackson had two hundred swimmers. They did things big in Texas, and they swam all over Texas. They went to Dallas, to San Antonio, they traveled all over. In one year, Celeste put a hundred thousand miles on the car traveling all over to the swimming meets while I was in New Jersey. Johnny was in the championships, I flew down, they were in Houston. Now, if you want to see a championship, you thought you were in the Olympics. They had teams from all over Texas and each team had multiple swimmers. They sat each group down, and they didn't make a noise, or you're out, you're eliminated from the tournament, things were quiet. Johnny came up, and he's swimming, and he wins the tournament. He won the Tri-State Championship as a nine year old and ten year old in Texas. Yes, he was the state champ. ... Every time they went to a meet, they would go to Dallas, they would go over to another big city, and so forth, and they said, "That's the guy you got to beat," and they couldn't pronounce his name, Paraskevas. "That's the guy you got to beat." ... Celeste felt so proud, you know, she'd be in line going to lunch, they all lined up and they're all pointing. , "That's the guy." They couldn't pronounce the name, and Celeste is smiling, "Beat him," he was the champ. The reason we moved to Lake Jackson, there was an OBGYN practice available. The doctor was leaving, he said, "You can have the practice." He was the only OBGYN doctor in Lake Jackson. I was going to go take over the practice. Lo and behold there was another OBGYN from Pennsylvania interested in the practice too. Guess who it was. Ron Paul, the senator in Washington. Ron Paul came down. I said, "Who is this?" He said, "Ron Paul." I didn't know him at the time. He said, "He's a doctor from Pennsylvania. He's coming down, he also wants the job," and we were going to work together as partners. For a whole year we were negotiating to run a practice together, and meantime, Ron Paul's son, Rand, who is running for senator from Kentucky, is on the swimming team with John. They were swimming together all over Texas, they were buddies, and they knew each other. Johnny just wrote him a letter congratulating him on winning the primary in Kentucky. He wrote him a letter, and he was going to call him on the phone. For that whole year Celeste was a patient of his. We knew Ron Paul from the beginning. ... When Johnny and Leslie got into high school, they went to private schools, Wardlaw-Hartridge, and then, they went to Northfield, Mt. Herman up in Massachusetts. Leslie went to college at Mt. Vernon in Washington, D.C. The Kennedy's went there. When she graduated all the Kennedy's were there. It was an all-girls school. ... We lived down in Lake Jackson Texas to start a practice. Celeste lived there for a year. I had a beautiful home on the lake, a gorgeous home, and I used to fly there every two weeks, ... something hit me. I said, "I don't belong down here." I have to readjust to Southern living, you have to know the people. Up in New Jersey, I was born up there, and when people say something, you don't have to look and be quizzical, you knew what they meant. If they're kidding, you knew, but when you're in another neighborhood, you don't know if they mean it or they're kidding. I'll never forget in Iselin, New Jersey where I was practicing, there was a fellow from China and he was running a store and I said something, I was joking, and he took it word-for-word what I meant. ... I was kidding, and He said, "Why are you calling me a liar?" I said, "I'm not calling you a liar. It's an idiom, it's a way of talking." He didn't understand it. He took it word-for-word and that hit me when I went to Lake Jackson. I said I'm going to be talking to these people, and I may be joking, and they may take something serious because I was older, I was in the service, "I don't belong here," and I talked to Celeste, and she understood. The kids

stayed there for that whole year because they were in school and John won the state championship in swimming, and they came back to Jersey. We moved the two truckloads back to New Jersey.

SH: Did you go back to the same house?

AP: Yes I never sold it. I was living in an empty house. Only my bed. Nora was living with her friends. Nora came back and lived with us until she died suddenly travelling to Mississippi.

AP: Nora was living with someone and then, she came back. Nora was a wonderful person, big, heavyset. ... We could travel anywhere in the world. We went all over Europe--England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, almost every country--went to North Africa. We went to Hawaii, went to Mexico, went to South America, Venezuela, Peru, and Argentina, Brazil. We traveled the whole world. Every November and every February we took off, and one of our greatest vacations was Davos, Switzerland. I came home one time, it was wintertime, December, and Celeste said, "We're going to Davos." I said, "Honey, it's winter. Let's go where it is warm. I don't want to go there." We went to Switzerland, and we had the nicest vacation. Davos was so gorgeous, formal dinners every night. We had to get dressed up and they were serving us fifteen course dinners and the kids got sleepy. They couldn't eat the European food, they're not used to it. They said, "Where's McDonald's?" I said, "Johnny, there's no McDonald's here." They couldn't eat the food. [laughter] What happened, the trip was all paid for, and Johnny would go to the bar every day, and he was ordering something. I said, "Johnny, what are you ordering?" It was some kind of a drink; it was a sweet drink of some kind. I didn't think anything of it. At the end of the week or so, the guy says, "Doctor, you owe me a couple hundred dollars." I said, "Why?" [laughter] "Your son is buying an expensive drink." It was a soda combination of some kind. "You owe two hundred dollars." I said, "Johnny, what are you doing?"

SH: Was Johnny older than Leslie?

AP: ... Johnny is eleven-and-a-half months younger than Leslie. They were playing hockey and we could watch the hockey game from our hotel window. All Europe was playing the championship in Davos. ... I said, "Let's go to the hockey game." They were selling hot dogs, knackwurst or something on coal burners. So, Johnny bought one. Every night I had to pay for admission, because he went there to get a hot dog because he couldn't eat the dinner. They had European cooking, he couldn't stand the food. I had to pay for admission to buy a knackwurst. ... [laughter] That was the greatest trip we had. We went skiing, I tried to ski, but I was too cautious because if I broke my arm I can't practice. So, I gave up skiing. We went sleigh riding, horse and buggy, sleigh rides into the mountains and all that. It was the nicest vacation. We're going home from Davos. The train had to go to Zurich to catch a plane. Halfway, the train had to stop, and we had to connect to another train, and they had to move the entire luggage one block to the other train. We had fifteen pieces of luggage. Wayne Rob, Leslie, John, Celeste and I, there's six of us, and we had fifteen pieces of luggage. The train was there. They got into their stateroom and I said, "Wave like you're saying goodbye." I had the camera taking movies, and I had the fifteen pieces of luggage with me and the train pulls out. [laughter] I'm standing there taking the picture. I got it on movies in the camera, we watched it. They're all waving, and

the train took off. I'm all alone, fifteen pieces of luggage, and Celeste has no money, I got all the money. The train goes to Zurich. They're very punctual in Europe, they don't delay. I said to the conductor, I said, "Hey, I got to get on the train." He says, "Next train, goodbye." [laughter] I'm standing there, I asked somebody, "Yes, there's another train coming within the hour. You'll have another train." "Going to Zurich?" "Yes, going to Zurich." Oh, Celeste is on the train and the conductor came for the ticket, she has no tickets. He said, "Well, you have to pay for it." She has no money. The guy across the aisle, he understood the Swiss language, he says, "I understand what he's saying, I'll talk to the conductor." The conductor says, "You tell her, when you get back to Zurich, and your husband gets there, you make sure you give us those tickets, and you pay for those train rides." She rode to Zurich, and they all get off. I get on the train an hour later, I pull into Zurich, I don't see anybody. I have all the luggage, fifteen pieces by the desk while I'm looking for them. Now, I find Rob, then I lose Rob, I find Wayne, then I find John and Celeste then I lose them and I find the others. The train station is so large, it's about five square blocks big. Rob said, "They're in the cafeteria." I asked the girl, "Where's the cafeteria?" She said, "Over there." There are fifteen cafeterias, which one, no one knew. Celeste has no money. Leslie had to go to the bathroom. She goes to the bathroom, you had to have a Swiss coin. She didn't have any money. Leslie says, "Mom, I got to go, I got to go." She shoved her underneath the door, and says, "Go to the bathroom," and the girl grabbed a hold of Celeste and says, "You owe me money. You can't do that. That's against the law," she spoke English. She said, "I have no money. Leslie you go in the bathroom. I don't care what she says." [laughter] She came out, and now I found Rob. I said, "Get everybody together." It took us over an hour to get everybody together. Now, I come back my luggage is gone. I'm getting a cab, and there's no luggage. I said to the girl, "Where is the luggage?" She said, "They took it." I said, "Who took it?" She said she didn't know. I said, "Fifteen pieces of luggage, we got to get on the airplane, we got to go to New York, and we have no luggage." I get to the hotel, I said to the fellow, "Did any luggage come in?" He said, "Yes, there's fifteen pieces over there." How they knew that was the hotel I don't know, but there was the luggage. We go to eat dinner, and now they found American food. They found steak, potatoes, vegetables they could eat. Rob and Wayne and Johnny ordered steaks. The trip was paid for, all meals and all. I said, "Go ahead and eat. Have a good time." I finished the meal. They come with the check, two hundred dollars. I said, "What's this?" I said, "I have everything paid for. I'll show you the tickets." He said, "Doctor, everything except Zurich." He said, "Your tickets paid for everything except Zurich," [laughter] and Johnny was drinking specials, holy mackerel, two hundred dollars just at the bar. ... We got on the plane, came home, it was one of the nicest Christmases. That was really an adventure. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

AP: If I didn't fly down to Georgetown six times I never would have been a doctor. They lost my application and they apologized. I completed my first year and worked during the summer off in New York City for Mr. Powers, President of Varick Pharmaceutical. Mr. Power was Jim Weidermans father in law; we were in the service together. He got me the job. I'm playing golf every Thursday with the President of the company, and had a great time that year. At Georgetown classes that first year were from eight to five. You wore a coat and tie as hot as it was. Father McNally, a Jesuit, was the Dean and he greeted us with these remarks: "Look to your right, look to your left, one of you may not be here next year." That's how he spoke, and

everyone shook in their boots. Anatomy was our main subject. The first year there were six students to a cadaver, no air conditioning. The odor was unbelievable. We removed and dissected the entire body the first semester. We studied hard. The end of the first year we took our finals. Joe Torres and I roomed together. We were up past midnight cramming. Our last final exam was biochemistry, by far the most difficult. Dr. Hess, a German professor was tough and tolerated no nonsense. On one of our weekly quizzes, he gave a zero if you didn't know the formula for salt nacl. Georgetown wanted only one hundred students. ... Hess is going to decide who the hundred students are, and they took a hundred eight, and the rest were out. I was shaking like a leaf because biochemistry was the hardest subject we had, really the hardest. Lo and behold I get a letter from Dr. Hess. I opened the letter, and it said, "You had a ninety-three average in biochemistry. I'm excusing you from the examinations."

SH: Oh, my word.

AP: I almost fell through the floor. I had a ninety-three average, I didn't even know I had that and don't have to take the exam. I packed my bag; I was going home a week earlier. Academically, the first year was the hardest. Students very rarely flunked after the first year

SH: Where were you housed?

AP: We were all boarding out. ... Bob D'Amico and I found a place on Observatory Place, Mrs. Dunn was our Landlady. Two other college students boarded with us, Reinaldo Herrera and Manuel Brecino, both college students. They never studied and almost flunked out. Reinaldo Herrera was from Venezuela. His name was Reinaldo Herrera Osler. When South America was liberated by General Bolivar, went to Europe, and got the help of General Osler, a German general. He said, "I need your help, we're going to liberate South America, going to take it over." They liberated South America. When the war was over, Bolivar asked General Osler, "What would you like as a gift?" He took what became Caracas, the capital of Venezuela. General Osler married into the Herrera family. Reinaldo's family owned all of Caracas, they owned all the hotels. His uncle owned all the steel mills in South America. His other uncle owned Bacardi Rum, they were multimillionaires. He was one of my roommates. ... He was six foot tall. ... He's eighteen years old, and always wore a black pin stripe suit with shirt and tie. He was always dressed. When his mother and father went to New York City, they took over the Copacabana, and everyone from Hollywood and all the big actors came to their parties because he threw the biggest parties in New York City. They all waited for Mr. Herrera to come. ... They had five mansions all over the world. Everyone knew the Herrera's. Celeste and I were vacationing in Aruba. I said, "You know, Venezuela is only fifteen miles away." I said, "Let's go visit Reinaldo." ... She said, "Do you have his phone number?" I said, "No." She said, "How are you going to get him?" Herrera is like Smith, twenty million Herreras in Venezuela. I said, "Just listen to this. I'll get Reinaldo." I made a telephone call to Caracas. I said to the operator, "I'd like to talk to Reinaldo Herrera." He said, "Are you kidding?" He says, "Which one?" I said, "I'll tell you what. I want you to give me the richest Reinaldo Herrera in Venezuela." He was on the phone in one second, and there he was. He said, "This is Reinaldo." I said, "this is Ange." "Oh, no," he says. [laughter] He invited me down there, and we spent the most beautiful week there. I'm telling you, a mansion in the old part of Caracas. He has I don't know how many acres, he had thirty antique Mercedes there, he collected them, and the house

you walk around the veranda on the outside, you go to each room. He married a girl named Carolina, and she's the famous dress designer in New York, that's his wife. She designed dresses for the whole world. Her two daughters are in the business too. ... They used to live on Park Avenue, his family's place, but now they have their own, and so I walk into the first room, and it's a library, beautiful high ceiling, and there is a painting of a general on a grey horse, General Osler. That was his grandfather. He liberated South America. That was the nicest week. He put us up in a hotel, sent Celeste three dozen roses every day, and we went to the best clubs in Caracas we lived it up. While he was boarding with me for that year, he was going to Georgetown and took a cab to school every day. His uncle was taking care of all his bills in New York, and he kept asking for money, but his uncle won't give it to him. He says, "Cut your spending down." He was only eighteen years old. He borrowed money from me. Every month he owed me over one hundred dollars. He never knew where his parents were. He called Paris. He called Madrid. He called Park Avenue. Every month his phone bill was one hundred fifty dollars or more. Mrs. Dunn come up and said, "Oh, another hundred dollars. ... Is he going to pay me? ... Am I stuck with it?" I said, "Mrs. Dunn, don't worry about Reinaldo. He'll pay you." At the end of the month, his uncle would send me a check to cover the money he owed me. He took cabs all over. Now Manuel Brecino, his father was an international lawyer, he ran all the cartels in South America, around the world, multimillionaire. He wanted me to spend the summer with him on my vacation. I said, "Manuel, you are out of your mind. I got to work. I go to a medical school." I said, "I can't be riding on your yacht." He said, "I got five yachts down there in Caracas." Anyway that second year they almost flunked me out of medical school. Every night they wanted to go to dinner. I said, "I can't. I got to study." We go to dinner, I come back ten o'clock at night, and I didn't even begin my study. I lost three hours of study. I said, "You're going to flunk me out of medical school." I was in the top third of the class as a freshman, second year I went to the bottom third. Then, I went back up to the top third when they left. They left in a year. They went to ... Georgetown. Georgetown knew who they were. They were just bidding their time. Manuel said, ... "I'm going to Paris next year. I'm going to study art." They're just kids waiting for their college years to go by, but Reinaldo always looked like an ambassador, he wanted to be an ambassador. ... He was going to get one because of his family. That first year, they almost flunked me out of medical school, and Mrs. Dunn had a headache--she couldn't believe it--but it was a great year. They were going to school every day, eight o'clock. I'm going to school, eight o'clock. I had a car, I had an old Oldsmobile. I said, "Reinaldo and Manuel, I'll drop you off. The medical school is right there. Why get a cab?" ... Listen to this--Reinaldo would call for a cab at eight o'clock, 8:05 Manuel called for a cab--two cabs, that's how they lived. Manuel came up to me one day, he says, "I need some money." I said, "What happened?" Well, he was a lady killer, he was good looking, all the girls were after him. He was going out every night. I said, "What's the matter? Why do you need money?" He said, "I have no more money. My bank account is empty. My father won't give me any money." I said, "Why, you did something wrong?" ... He went to school, it was September. In the middle of October--it was about four weeks--he went through four thousand dollars. His father cut him off. I said, "Did you know you had four thousand dollars?" He said, "No, I just kept spending." [laughter] His father put him on a budget. They were both borrowing money from me, but I was running short. We kept in touch for years. Reinaldo lived in New York, I used to visit with him. Robert D'Amico, my classmate, became professor of ophthalmology at Saint Vincent's in New York City, and I used to go to him to have my eyes checked, "How is Reinaldo doing?" He says, "Same old Reinaldo." ... Yes, he had two children--they were both

girls--and he was internationally known. Now, when he turned twenty-one, he inherited fifty million dollars, and guess what happened? All the socialites all over the world were calling him. ... You couldn't believe it. Phone calls were coming from all over. Everyone knew Reinaldo was coming into the money. They didn't want to talk when he was eighteen, but now they're going to talk to him, and I said to D'Amico, ... "How is he going to handle this?" "Ah, he will handle it somehow," and he married Carolina. She was from Caracas, but there was a big socialite from Europe, kept bugging him, and he was twenty-one, but she was thirty and he almost married her, but those two guys were something else. ... When I was in Georgetown, the first two years went by nicely. I got excused from one exam we were now working a full-year, we only got a week off, and that's all. We had no big vacations. I felt comfortable with my classes.

SH: Were you already married then?

AP: No, after my freshmen year I was working in New York, coming home one day I said hello to my next door neighbor sitting on the front stoop. A love affair developed in no time. I graduated medical school, took a residency in OB-GYN at D.C. Medical Center. Celeste moved to Alexandria and we married having two children in one year.

SH: When did you decide to go into obstetrics?

AP: When I finished the internship, my mind was made up to go into surgery. I was going to be a surgeon. So, I called Dr. (Coffey?), my professor at Georgetown. He said, "All right, come down here. I'll put you in the class." He said, "You'll be a resident." I went to Georgetown working in pathology. During that time I decided to become a resident in OB-GYN at D.C. General Hospital. I called Doctor Bepko and he arranged my residency at D.C. General Hospital under DR. Machetti, my professor. We worked at D.C. General Hospital delivering 7,000 babies a year. Our surgical schedule was ideal. I was operating constantly when I went into private practice the chief of service couldn't believe my resume. I also worked as a pathology resident for six months doing all the autopsies and reading multiple slides. I was working every other night. I was seeing Celeste on and off. She was coming down from NJ. In 1958 she moved to Alexander, Virginia. We got married in 1958; Leslie and John were born a year apart, 1958 and 1959. We moved from one home to another rather quickly from 1960 to 1965. We moved three times, home and office, private home on a lake and finally we purchased a large Georgian type white brick home, New Orleans type of home with a wrought iron balcony, five bedrooms, slate roof on five acres on the Plainfield Country Club. We immediately joined the club. I was a member there until I retired. We truly enjoyed the club Celeste was constantly celebrating multiple events over the years, birthday parties, weddings, anniversaries and various functions. We were sincere club members.

SH: Were you involved with the local community?

AP: Celeste was president of the Hospital Auxilliary and over the years she raised a substantial amount of money with her annual ball, auctions and hospital affairs. I ran a number of gold tournaments for the hospital. Some of her greater affairs were at the Astor and Plaza Hotels in New York.

SH: Did you ever teach?

AP: I gave lectures for the Union County medical society at various hospitals.

SH: I read in your memoirs about delivering your grandsons.

AP: Yes, I delivered Wayne's two kids, John and Kevin. Donna said, "I'm going to let you deliver my babies," and I enjoyed that, delivered both of them and watched them grow up. Rob, my other stepson, he had one son, Robbie, and he's traveling around the world now. Rob lives in Mississippi. He was born there, never left. ... Celeste and I bought twenty-five acres down there. She said, "Eventually we'll build a home down there and retire there." Rob lives there, and he hasn't left. He clears all the ... naval ships out of the Ingalls shipyards in Pascagoula, the ship building company. Every naval ship has to have this inspection he goes on shakedown cruises to clear them. Rob is wonderful, but he'll never leave Mississippi, no. Wayne came to New Jersey, his wife is a school teacher; she's retiring this year, and they had the two kids, and they were always close by. We always kept active, and Celeste would go to Mississippi without me because I was so busy. She said, "I'm going down to visit my sisters." They had, you know, fifteen kids, and she would go to Delta City, go visit out in the country her mother and father, but then a hurricane came, a tornado, and Delta City was blown out. There was eight of them, of her family, in the house on the cotton fields--her father had all those cotton fields--and they were lying on the floor under the beds. The house blew away, and the eight people were sitting on the cement slab; not one was killed, and on that block nine people were killed, that same tornado. They saw it coming. The air conditioner went through two walls and out the back of the house into the fields, and lucky her mother ducked; her head would have been gone. Delta City was a crossroad, and one day they put up a red light, and her father, went down, raised hell, and told the commissioners, "What the hell are you putting a traffic light in Delta City?" He said, "We don't need one. You're wasting the taxpayer's money." Every Saturday night, they took rifles and shot it out. After six months of replacing the light every Saturday, they gave up and said, "To the hell with the light." [laughter] They'd get a little drunk, and bam, out came the light. Delta City was the nicest town. I enjoyed going down there all the time visiting the country people.

SH: One of the things you had written about was almost missing the delivery of your son John.

AP: I was watching a football game and Celeste went into labor. Velma said to get her to the hospital immediately. I was watching football and suddenly I realized I better run. I took off, and now the hospital is a half hour away. I had Dr. Cummins, my professor waiting for me. I get halfway there, and she said, "Ooo." I said, "Oh, no." I felt a strong contraction. Now, I'm speeding, "Ooo," she's screaming, "Oh, I feel pressure, I feel pressure. Oh, my love, I'm going to deliver in the car". I get to the hospital, I jammed on the brakes, and Dr. Cummins is waiting on the steps for me. He said, "Where have you been? I've been here an hour." Right to the delivery room, no anesthesia, delivered. I went up to her room, I got on the bed, I said, "I'll wait for her." He comes knocking on the door. I said, "What's the matter? When is she going to deliver?" He said, "You got a baby boy." On the way there I decided on a name, John Loukas. We lived in Anacostia, and there was a big black worker, Aikens, and he knew that Celeste was married to a

doctor, he would always come and ask Celeste for advice. "Now, I got this, I got that". One day I come home, and she's telling me, "Aikens had a big problem, and I treated him, and he's feeling fine. ... In fact he came up to me, and said, 'Celeste, that's the greatest medication. You cured me.'" I said, "What did you give him?" She said, "I gave him prenatal vitamins." [laughter] "I had boxes of samples of prenatal vitamins. I gave him prenatal vitamins, and he said I cured him." The next door neighbor was a German girl, and her little daughter got violently ill. I was working, and she went to Celeste. ... She says, "What can I do? My daughter has a fever," and Celeste said, "Your daughter has the measles. Don't do anything. Stay home." She calls me at the hospital, she says, "Mrs. So and So, her daughter has a fever. She got a rash," and I said, ... "Send her to the hospital emergency room." She said, "No, no, she's got the measles." I said, "Honey, I'm a doctor." You're making a diagnosis and all that. I'm not there." I said, "Send her to the emergency room." She goes over there and said, "My husband, I talked to him, he says go to the emergency room." She comes home, and Celeste said, "What's wrong?" "Your daughter has the measles." She said to me, "See, you big shot." She says, "You made her go to the hospital. I told you she had the measles."

SH: Did you have help in Alexandria with the two boys and then the two little ones?

AP: No. Celeste lived alone, occasionally her sister would come up and give her a hand, because she had Leslie and John, and she was all alone by herself, but she managed. I came every other night, and I would sleep, that's all. In fact, one night Celeste had a bridge party, and I was the fourth player. Her sister and I are partners, and Leslie was acting up. She was only a little over a year old and I'm playing bridge. I went over there to calm her down. I don't come out, and the people said, "When is Ange going to come out? We're playing bridge." Celeste says, "You better go home." They said, "Why?" "I know exactly what he's doing." I was so tired, I fell asleep, and she knew it. She says she didn't tell them, she said, "You just go home. I know what it is." I fell asleep alongside Leslie. I was so sleepy because we worked twenty-four hours a day, we never slept. When we're on service, we never slept because we're delivering babies, seven thousand babies, someone is in labor all the time. I was so tired.

SH: Did you practice in Virginia or Maryland?

AP: No, what happened, my last year of internship I went up to New Jersey, and I went to my folks and borrowed some money, and I put a deposit on a house, and I called Lou, and I told him, "Fix me an office downstairs." He was a very close friend of mine, excellent carpenter, a design carpenter, made everything luxurious. He came over and made me an office downstairs. Leslie used to sit on the stoop, and I had to put a railing there because I didn't want her to come downstairs and open up the examining rooms. In two years we moved to another house, and I made the whole upstairs to the most gorgeous office. I had the nicest office, and my practice just boomed. I was applying for hospital privileges. They reviewed my record. Dr. Armstrong, Chief of Surgery, went over my surgical procedures as a resident. He said he never interviewed an applicant with all that surgical experience, and said, "You're on the staff." JFK Hospital opened. I was doing surgery at both hospitals and finally decided to work out of only one hospital and I chose JFK in Edison. We joined the Plainfield Country Club after moving to another beautiful home on the 16th fairway of Plainfield Country Club. Celeste threw the best parties at the club. When Wayne got married at the club all her sisters came up from Mississippi.

They had a rebel flag and danced all day long. They never saw a wedding like ours. "Way Down in Dixie" was the theme. I was an active golfer. I qualified for the championship flight for many years. John and Leslie were on the swimming team. John won the nine-year old swimming championship in New Jersey. He is still a member at Plainfield C.C. Whenever Celeste and I go there for a dinner the members still recall our membership. The parties, the weddings, the rebel flag, all out affairs, Celeste knew how to throw the big ones. They haven't seen anything since. I played golf all my life. I was a handicap of six. I was playing in the club championship every year, played in tournaments all around the county. In fact, I was playing for a county championship at Metuchen Country Club, and my tee off time was eight o'clock in the morning, and at seven o'clock, a dentist's wife went into labor, and I had to deliver her, and I had to forfeit the match. I played in the Pro-Am tournaments. I played with many prominent people, Yogi Berra, Phil Rissuto, presidents of US corporations. I was on the golf course constantly. When I retired in Florida, I played in many Pro-Am tournaments and I won the annual Rutgers Alumni Tournament. It wasn't until my late eighties that I have up my game. Compensatory golf was not my game.

SH: When did you retire?

AP: In 2001. I sold my practice, and I didn't do any OB. I just worked in the office for a year or two, just to get the patients accustomed to a new doctor. Finally his practice was booming, and he more or less hinted that he needs the whole office for himself. I retired in 2001.

SH: Did you immediately move to Florida?

AP: No, what happened, we were living in the big house, Leslie and John were going to private school, they graduated, and then college. We decided that there was nobody there, just Celeste and I, and Nora was our maid. What happened was she was on vacation going to Mississippi, and we told her to go to Mississippi and pick out a plot of land and we'll build you a home for retirement. On the way in Atlanta, Georgia, she had a heart attack and died on the airplane, yes. ... Celeste says, "We'll ship the body to Pascagoula, and I'll come down for the funeral." Rob loved Nora so much. He said, "No, you're not going to do that, Mom," and he flew to Atlanta and took Nora back to Pascagoula himself on the airplane, and they had a burial in Pascagoula. The whole town--the mayor, the president of the bank, they all came. It was a big funeral. It was the biggest funeral they ever had. They had the black choir singing. I couldn't understand why, but Celeste's family was known, her sister Doza lived there, Bobby lived there, and Doza's son, Pat Russim, was president of the oil company in Pascagoula. They knew Celeste, and Celeste took it as being normal. After the ceremony, Nora's niece took her to New Orleans and buried her.

SH: Did you sell the home?

AP: ... We finally told the kids, "Do you want the home? ... You're out of college." Wayne and Rob were married. Leslie practically made Washington, D.C. her home. ... She was born in Alexandria, Virginia. She went to private school, and then went to college, Mt. Vernon, graduated from there--all girls' school, the Kennedy's went there--and then, she got a job from Marriot in Washington, D.C., and then, she married in Washington. She never left. Washington

was her home. We told her, "Do you want the home or not?" ... Johnny was not interested in the home. We had five acres, and we sold the five acres. We moved to Iron Gate, into a condominium. From Iron Gate, we moved to Colonia, kept the condo. We stayed there for one year. We moved back to Iron Gate. From Iron Gate, we went to Enclave, another condo. Now, I retired, went to Rossmoor Retirement Village, that wasn't for us. We didn't like it, and from Rossmoor, we went to Polo Island in Florida. We lived in Polo Island, and we were watching the polo games, the national championship, from our back patio. It was right across the little stream, and there they were there playing polo, and we lived there for four years, and then, we bought this place in ... West Palm Beach. As I said, we moved ten times. They couldn't believe that Celeste would do this. [laughter] Well, we did it, and all the time I was busy, never slowed down, busy as could be. If we wanted a vacation, we would go, because Nora was there.

[TAPE PAUSED]

AP: ... I had such an active practice, and we lived on five acres with a beautiful five bedroom Georgian type white brick home. Someone approached me, "Do you want to buy a pony?" I said to Celeste, "Let me build a little corral, a small corral, and then we'll go buy that pony." I said, "Leslie could ride that pony. Johnny could ride the pony." It was a little black pony. We buy the pony, we called it Belle, that's Celeste's mother's name and our granddaughter's name. We named the little pony Belle, and I had a little corral. I fed the horse, pet the horse, I had a saddle. ... I used to take Leslie for a little ride around the property, I didn't let her ride alone. ... Every other morning or so the cops would say, "Dr. Paraskevas, your pony is in the neighbor's backyard over there." I said, "What?" I go in the corral, there's no pony. I said, "How did he get out of there?" The gate is locked. Another couple of days later, "Your pony is in another backyard," and he said, "Dr. Paraskevas, you've got to do something about that pony, you know." After about a month or so of this, he said, "We can't go around chasing that pony all the time." He said, "You take care of him." I made the corral a little higher, so he won't jump. I found out he was jumping. Someone said they saw the horse jump. I said, "Did he jump that corral?" I made the corral a little higher. We're sitting there one day, and I get a call from the Plainfield Country Club. "Dr. Paraskevas, your pony is tearing up our golf course, all the greens." I said, "Who are you kidding?" I said, "My pony is in the corral." He said, "No, ... and you're going to have to pay for all the damage on those greens." I was a member of the club. I said, "Something is wrong." I said, "That's not my pony." Finally I said, ... "Someone tell me the description of that pony." About a week later, they called me again, "Your pony is tearing up," they said. I said, "What color is that horse?" They said, "The horse is tan." I said, "I have a black pony." They said, "It's not your pony?" "No, I have a black pony." The cops verified it, it was a tan pony, tearing up the golf course. I couldn't understand why. One night Joe Stanton, who was in service with me, was in New Jersey, and he spent the week with me, see. It's eleven o'clock at night, and we see this brown pony walking by the sun parlor. ... We're sitting in here--it's eleven o'clock at night--and the moon is shining bright, and the pony was walking right in front of the house. I said to Joe, "Joe, that's that wild pony that's tearing up the golf course." I said, "Joe, I'm going to capture that pony," and he said, "You are?" I said, "Yes, you stay here." ... I went out of the house--the pony took off. I went to the corral, I took a rope, and I tied Belle, the pony, to the corral. I opened up the gate, and I came back to the house. I said, "Joe, I got it all set up." The moon is shining bright; it looks like daylight. I said, "I'm going to wait for that pony. ... I'm going to stand by the pear tree by the gate and watch that pony, and he's going to go into that

corral because ... he's lonely, and he wants to be buddies with Belle." We're waiting. ... I see the pony coming. The pony kept coming ever so cautious, looking. He goes to the gate, but he looks over at me. Now, the gate was about from here to that cabinet there, ... and I'm standing against the pear tree like this. So, the pony comes over, he smelled me, a scent. He kept coming. The moon is so bright, a tan pony about this high like a big dog, a white mane, and a white tail. When he ran across the golf course, he was an unbelievable sight. ... He comes all the way up to me, and he growls. I said, "I can't run because the trees behind me, and if he jumps up like this, he'll kill me." I didn't know what to do. I said, "If I scare him, he may do this," because a wild pony usually turns around and kicks with the hind feet, but I wasn't thinking about that, except I didn't like that growl. He put his nose right there.

SH: On your knee?

AP: He walked away, because I didn't move. He walked, he finally goes in, and now he's in the corral. I said, "Come on, two more feet, two more feet," and the corral door was right next to me. "Wham!" I slammed it, and I caught the pony, but he got wild as hell. He got so wild, he was kicking. He broke my corral, the rafters were flying, he was kicking everything, unbelievable power. I said, "Joe, come out and give me a hand. ... I'm going to get some nails, and we got to put the corral together, or I'm going to lose both horses. ... I don't mind losing both horses, but what am I going to do with that wild horse? He's knocking my corral down." Joe and I nailed the fence together, and we corralled them. Next morning, he was there, I couldn't feed him. I go in to feed Belle, and the horse would turn around and kick his hind feet. I said, "He's going to kill me." I didn't go inside the corral. ... They told me it was a mustang, a wild horse, never had been trained. He was in New Jersey running around for years and never trained, he was a mustang, true mustang. I talked to a farmer, he said, "You've got a mustang. That horse, you've got to corral him, tie him down, and he's got to be trained." I couldn't do it. What I did, I built a big corral, an acre and put the fence around the whole corral, and I put Bub and Belle in there, and they're running around. ... Now, Belle is getting wild because of that horse. They couldn't ride her because he's too wild now. What am I going to do with it? It came the end of summer, and I said, "Honey, I got to get rid of the horse. I have no barn. I can't keep horses, and that thing is wild. Let's get rid of it." I called a farmer up, lived down the street, and he came over. He said, "I'll buy both horses ... from you." Twenty-five, fifty bucks. He comes in with a truck and van, and he puts Belle in. ... A little resistance now, but Belle got in there. Now, he can't catch the pony, he's running wild, and every time he goes near him, he'd kick his hind feet. He said, "Boy, you got a mustang here." He took a rope and tied it to the fence, and he held it. When the pony ran around, he tripped, they threw the lasso around him. They got the lasso around him, but they can't get him in the van. He's kicking, he's going to break the van. [laughter] Finally, they get him in. Every time I go to the hospital, I would drive by that farm. I said, "How are you doing with that pony?" He said, "He's wild as hell. ... I got him in the barn, but ... I'm afraid he's going to kill himself because he bucks his head against the beams, he's wild. You've got a real mustang here, and I've never seen one like this that I couldn't train." ... The end of the winter, I went back, and he said, "The horse killed himself. He banged himself against the rafters of the barn so much he killed himself." Those were my cowboy days. [laughter] ... I'm glad I got rid of him, and I almost killed myself. ... While he was running wild, Raynell, Celeste's niece, came up from Mississippi and says, "Uncle Ange, ... I'll capture that wild pony. Give me the saddle," put the saddle on Belle, she got a rope, and she's galloping

across the golf course after that wild pony. She found him, she threw the lasso over his neck going twenty miles an hour or whatever, and the saddle slipped. She fell--the saddle and all--and the two ponies took off, we lost both ponies. [laughter] They took off, she comes back, she wasn't injured at all. ... "Uncle Ange, the saddle slipped. I didn't have it too tight, and the pony took off with the lasso on his neck, and I came back with the saddle, and we lost both ponies." Finally the police got them. I don't know how they got them. The wild pony came back, and they put him in the corral, we got them both in the corral again, and I sold them, as I told you, got rid of them. ... A friend of mine had a Tennessee Walker, and I put him in the corral. A teenager took care of him for me because I was too busy. She fed them; she gave them water; she would ride them. One day she broke her arm, and I came home and there she is, she has Leslie in her lap on the pony and both of them, she's riding the horse bareback. I said, "What are you doing? That's my daughter. You have no saddle, you have a broken arm, and you're jumping with a horse." I said, "Are you out of your mind?" [laughter] I said, "You don't do that." She says, ... "Dr. Paraskevas, it's no big deal." It was a Tennessee Walker, nice horse. Came winter, it was too cold, I sold the pony to that farmer, and I took the corral down. That was the end of my cowboy days. [laughter]

SH: You tried everything.

[TAPE PAUSED]

AP: ... As I told you I played golf all my life, and I have three brothers; we're all born two years apart, John, George and Paul. ... We always played golf over the years, and especially after I came out of the war. We had a foursome, and we played golf for years, all the different golf courses. Paul developed cancer of the stomach and he died in 2001, broke up our foursome, but the three of us still kept playing golf, John and George and I, and we always had a friend of ours who would join to make it a foursome. When we were living at this house on Inman Avenue, that Georgian-type home, the riots were going on. Remember the riots, the big riots all over the country? Plainfield had a very big riot in the summer of 1967. Celeste and I were on vacation. A large group of blacks came marching up our driveway thinking our home was the Plainfield Country Club on five acres on the sixteenth hole. I think they mistook our home for the country club. We were on vacation, Wayne, John and Leslie were home and Nora, all by themselves. One day, Wayne comes running in and said, "Nora! Nora! There's ten, twelve people coming up our driveway. They're all black." He said, "Why? What's going on?" Nora took one look at them and says, "All right, you take Leslie and John, and you go downstairs and hide in one of the rooms. I'll take care of this." ... We had a rifle. Nora and Wayne used to go hunting for pheasants. Nora got the rifle and went up on the balcony of our home, the Georgian-type home, and there's black people coming down the hill toward the house, and she says, "All of you get out of here, or I'm going to shoot you," and they kept on walking. She said, "I told you, don't come any closer. I'll shoot you." She took that rifle and fired it over their heads, and boy, did they scoot, they ran. She ... fired once, fired twice, and they ran and never came back. I checked with the police, they said, "Yes, they thought your home was the country club, because it looks like a country club."

SH: How did you travel from your home to the hospitals? Were the streets closed off?

AP: We lived outside of Plainfield in Edison. The riots never extended beyond Plainfield. We were very safe.

SH: I thought one of the hospitals that you were at was closer to Newark.

AP: ... I was an intern at Saint Michael's in Newark. ... I was there for one year. As I told you, I was playing golf with all the doctors. It was one beautiful social year. I returned to DC General Hospital and Georgetown for my residency in OB-GYN. I had a great time every Thursday I played golf with most of my professors at all their private clubs--Congressional, Chevy Chase, Burning Tree, Army and Navy C.C., all of them. Playing good golf was a tremendous asset all my life especially in my practicing years and also when I was in the military. I played the best courses around the world. In the 1990s, the lay people took over the hospitals, HMO's came into play. "Doctors, you are so busy. We'll run the hospitals for you. We'll run everything for you," and that's when it changed, and that was the biggest mistake we ever made. There were a number of doctors that said, "Don't do it." The next thing you know, the doctors were no longer the administrators of the hospitals. The patients suddenly lost their identity with their own personal doctors, because they said, "We will not pay for it." My final ten years, I gradually made the transition, sold my practice and retired, forty wonderful years. The patients were ours, the feeling was personal and warm. My office was open all the time, walk in and talk. My forty years of practice were such a pleasure.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: The Korean War happens almost immediately after your graduation from Rutgers and you were in the Naval Reserves. How did that affect you?

AP: I was in World War II for four years and in the Naval Reserves until 1960. I was now thirty-eight years old. They never considered me for additional service. I served my time. I was teaching at the New Jersey School of Medicine in the Margaret Hague Maternity Hospital, Jersey City. I was an Assistant Professor in OB-GYN. The school moved to Seton Hall. I continued teaching residents. My practice became very active. I gave up teaching. When the HMO's entertained us around 1990, they warned us, "Your practice will change dramatically" and it did. Suddenly we were at the mercy of the HMO's. I was reaching a stage in my practice, I was looking forward to getting a partner and slowly transferring it over. I would give up deliveries and do only office practice and surgery. I successfully obtained a partner. I finally reached retirement stage and there was no hesitation. My career in medicine was full, active, and very rewarding. My patients reluctantly accepted my decision especially my longtime devoted ones. Our memories go back a long time.

SH: You have this wonderful partner in Celeste.

AP: You can't imagine how complete my life became from the first day I said "Hi" to Celeste sitting on the front stoop.

SH: I just want to say thank you very much.

AP: [laughter] Sandra, it was wonderful. I'm glad we did it because I kept thinking I was going to go to Tampa, but Tampa doesn't have a program [in oral history]. ...

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Reviewed by Alexandra McKinnon 05/23/2012

Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 05/24/2012

Reviewed by Kyle Downey 7/5/2012

Reviewed by Angelos Paraskevas 7/6/2012