



**Ken Thomas**  
**Mayor of Chandler: 1976 - 1979**  
Interviewed: November 16, 2005  
By: Jean Reynolds  
Public History Coordinator

JR: What is your father's name and where was he from?

KT: He was a Welshman, I'm the only one in my family born in this country. His name was J. D. Thomas. John D. Thomas, the D. was just an initial. My grandmother came here about the start of WWI for tuberculosis, I think she told me she had an option, she needed to go to Australia or the southwest, so she chose to come to Arizona. My folks came out to visit her, I think it was 1920, and I remember my dad saying he spent all his money and he couldn't get back and he's been here ever since. I had one brother, he has since passed on, I think he was 5 years old then. He couldn't speak English when he came here, all he could talk was Welsh. Of course back in those days we had a bilingual first grade with a bilingual teacher teaching the Spanish kids and then they bring us together in the second grade when the Mexican boys and girls could speak English. My brother is dark complexioned, my mother was dark complexioned, I was more like my dad. Since he couldn't speak English they put him with the Mexican kids, well he couldn't speak Spanish either. They didn't know what the hell to do with him. He did graduate from ASU and I told him, "You're not doing too good yet". Anyway, they would bring us together in the second grade and those kids could speak English just as well as I could, some of them better. I saw nothing wrong with the system except somebody brought a lawsuit on Tolleson years back and they outlawed it.

My dad came here and stayed, he got into construction and we traveled all over the state. I went to school in Chambers, AZ, which is between Holbrook and Gallop, it was on 66, the first time they paved 66, I think that was 1934 or 35. I went to school in Kanab, Utah when there were paving the road from Fredonia to the state line. I went to school in Casa Grande, first time they paved the road between Casa Grande and Sacaton, then I lived in Williams, I lived in Holbrook, I lived in Jacobs Lake, but fortunately I didn't have to go to school there. But our home was always west of Phoenix in what was called Lateral 19 and Yuma Road, which now translates to 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Van Buren. That's where I was born and that's where I went to school. I graduated from Phoenix Union High School. That was about the end of my education. I went into the Navy after that.

JR: Where was your father born?

KT: Born in Wales. Tairgwaith, if you can pronounce that. Welsh language is worse than German.

JR: Do you know what year he was born?

KT: He was born in either 1894 or 1895.

JR: Your father, prior to doing the road construction work, what was he doing prior to that?

KT: Before he came here?

JR: Yes.

KT: Well, he worked in the mines for a while. His father had a grocery store, bakery and butcher shop, all in one operation and that is what he was doing then when he got out of the mines before he came here.

JR: Was that in Wales or was that somewhere else?

KT: That was in Wales.

JR: So, when your grandmother came to Arizona she came from Wales directly to Arizona?

KT: Yes, she was my maternal grandmother.

JR: When your parents came to Arizona, where was your grandmother living at the time?

KT: She was living west of Phoenix where my dad finally built a house. She was a widow. She remarried after she got here sometime. Then her husband had some land, I don't know, 80, 90 or 100 acres, my dad bought 5 acres off of him right by where Fowler School is now right on Van Buren and that's where he built an adobe house, that's where I was born.

JR: So, you were born there in west Phoenix. Where did you go to school?

KT: I went to grade school right there. I could jump over the fence to the school right there.

JR: What was the name of the school?

KT: Fowler – it's still there. They have several schools in the district now. That's one of the older ones in west Phoenix. I think Pendergast is the oldest and Fowler is the next oldest in that area.

JR: What is the name of your mother?

KT: Mary Cienwen.

JR: She was from Wales also?

KT: Oh yes, same place. South Wales.

JR: Do you know when she was born?

KT: She was a year or two younger than my dad, that's all I know. My kids could tell you, they remember dates, I don't.

JR: Where did your parents meet each other?

KT: They grew up together in Wales, they went to school together, although my dad didn't have much education. I think my dad only went through the sixth grade. My mother had more education and then she became an apprentice seamstress. She could make clothes, she made all my clothes. I used to have suits and overcoats and everything as a little kid. She did sewing here after she got here.

JR: Were they married in Wales?

KT: Yes.

JR: When were they married?

KT: I don't know, I would imagine sometime around the first of WWI.

JR: Once your mother and your father came here to Arizona and they came to Phoenix, they were living with your maternal grandmother, is that right?

KT: Just shortly, they built their house right after that.

JR: Was the home they built near where your grandmother lived?

KT: Yes, right there.

JR: When were you born?

KT: March 22, 1925.

JR: You have one brother?

KT: Yes.

JR: Do you have any sisters?

KT: No sisters, just the two of us.

JR: Is he older than you?

KT: He was 9 ½ years older than me.

JR: What was your brother's name?

KT: David M. Thomas

JR: As you were telling me earlier, your father started doing road construction. So you moved from site to site?

KT: Yes, he was field superintendent for the Arizona Sand and Rock. They were the biggest road construction company in Arizona then. Their headquarters was at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and the river. D. W. Kelly that owned it, he controlled the river from Central all the way to 16<sup>th</sup> Street. He had access and anyone else that wanted gravel they had to come through him. From there my dad worked for him I think 14 years. He started in the Depression in the 30's and worked for him way up into the 40's.

JR: What did he do after that?

KT: Well, we started the business here in Chandler and he worked there awhile and then he finally retired.

JR: You said that your mother was working as a seamstress, was she doing that out of the home or did she actually work somewhere?

KT: At one time she worked for a fellow named Silverton in Phoenix, he made suits and stuff. Then she worked out of the house. Other than that, she didn't hold a job anywhere, she stayed home. My mother was a singer. All Welshmen think they are singers. Our family, my grandfather, my maternal grandfather, they immigrated to Pennsylvania in the Wilkesbury-Scranton area and that's coal mining area. My mother came out to visit them, she lived in Philadelphia for awhile and she took voice lessons there and she always did sing in Wales and her voice teacher wanted to send her to Italy to study voice. She said, no, she's going back to Wales to get married. He said you're going back there to scrub floors and change diapers. My mother said he was right, I should have listened to him. I remember her telling me that years later. But she used to sing on the radio once in awhile in Phoenix. You go to church, you could always hear her over everybody else. She was a contralto, had a loud voice.

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JR: What program was it that she sang on?

KT: KOY or KTR, I don't know it's been a long time ago.

JR: So, you attended Phoenix Union?

KT: That's where I graduated.

JR: Do you have any memories from being at high school, what that was like?

KT: Not any good ones because I wasn't a good student. I graduated in 1942, there were only two schools, North High and Phoenix Union, other than Carver for the black kids and St. Mary's, but North High was built in 1939 but Phoenix Union was there a long time.

JR: Did you have any hopes or dreams about what you wanted to do after you finished high school?

KT: Not really, the war was on, the war started in December, 1941, I graduated end of school year in 1942, I knew I was going to be drafted. I worked one year, I went in the Navy in 1943.

JR: Can you tell me a little bit about your WWII service?

KT: I went to Navy schools, I went to Ordinance School in Oklahoma and I was lucky enough to get the top 10% of my class. I went to Norden Bombsite School in Florida, from there I went to Automatic Pilot school in Norfolk, Virginia, there we had an overseas address, the mail came through the Fleet Post Office in New York. Before they moved Waves in there we had overseas pay. I was attached to that carrier service unit and that's where I stayed for the rest of the war. We'd go out on maneuvers but I was right there until the end of the war.

JR: What was your position or what you did?

KT: I got to be a Petty Officer second class. Then I went up for first class and I passed that but the war had ended and rank advances stopped, nobody advanced when the war ended because everybody was getting out. I was married in Norfolk, Virginia and I got out on the point system in January 28, 1946.

JR: What was the main thing you did while in the military? Did you have a certain role or certain position?

KT: What I did in the Navy? Well, we became aviation fire control guys, we worked on bomb sites, then bomb sites became obsolete, they started bombing with radar and then they were putting rockets on planes, we would install rockets. We did a little bit of everything, nothing was real important by that time because we had won the war just about then. The funny thing about the bomb site it was still restricted and we used it, we'd go out on flight training mission for young guys coming into this carrier service unit and we dropped water bombs over North Carolina over a swamp down there. Then we'd have to carry the bomb site back in and lock it in a safe. About that time I had five days off, my wife and I went to New York City, this was in August, we were there the day after VJ Day and there were two million people in Times Square, you talk about a mad house. I was walking on Fifth Avenue and there was a bomb site and the automatic pilot all

mounted on the window of a store telling you how to operate it and we were locking it in a safe. It's a wonder we won the war.

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JR: Tell me about your wife, what is her name?

KT: Vena Lynn. She was actually born in Chandler. Her folks had lived here, her mother taught school in Chandler years ago but they had moved to 20 acres west of Phoenix but she knew the doctor in Chandler and she came back here to have my wife and she was born here and then of course, she was raised in west Phoenix. We graduated from high school together.

JR: Is Lynn her maiden name?

KT: Vena Lynn Calhoun. Her dad was an old politician; he used to be Maricopa County Treasurer.

JR: I heard that name before. You guys met in high school?

KT: Yes, I met her there at Phoenix Union. I was going with her before that, I started going with her when I was a junior. We graduated from there. I went to three different high schools and lived in the same house. I went to Tolleson High School as a freshman, I wanted to take shop and they didn't have shop. So I went to North High in 1939, my grandmother had some apartments in that area, I lived with her and went to North High. The next year my dad bought me a 34 Chevrolet and I drove it to North High. I got my license when I was 15. I lied to get my license. They found out where I lived, if you lived below McDowell you had to go to Phoenix Union and they called me from the Registrars Office and said, "Where do you live?" I said, "I live at Route 3, Box 222". "No, don't give me that, I want the geographical location". So I told her, she said, "you're going to Phoenix Union next year". She thought she was getting to me, but I was already going with my (future) wife and she was at Phoenix Union and I was glad to transfer. It was closer anyway and I drove to Phoenix Union.

JR: What year did you get married?

KT: In 1944 in Norfolk.

JR: Do you have children?

KT: Three boys. The oldest is Gary, he works at Wells Fargo now, he's a computer man, graduated from ASU. He has three degrees, marketing, and a bachelor and masters in research biology. My next boy is Keith, he's a salesman, he graduated from ASU. My youngest is a teacher in the Roosevelt District, his name is Rick.

JR: Once you came back, the war ended and you came back, what happened then, what did you do?

KT: My dad was building a new house so I helped him, I painted and did some work around there for a few weeks then we just opened the locker plant in the 200 block of south Arizona Avenue, so I moved to Chandler and went to work killing beef.

JR: Why don't you tell me a little bit about how the locker plant got started, why did you chose Chandler?

KT: My brother married a girl from Chandler and he bought a couple of lots and just before the end of the war, the locker business was pretty good, they had plants in Mesa, in Phoenix, they had them in Tolleson, they had them everywhere. This was an agrarian area so he thought he'd start one, so he did. It was hard to do because my sister-in-law had to go out and pre-sell the lockers before you get a permit to build. You had to get certain equipment and you couldn't buy it, everything took a priority. But she pre-sold several hundreds of lockers and then they were able to get started. We started out with 638 lockers and we had a waiting list for them back then. But then deep freezers became popular and almost all our business was done for deep freezers then, although some people kept a locker because they didn't have room in their deep freezer. That's what most of our business was. I was there for just short of 49 years.

JR: Was the business started in 1946?

KT: Yes.

JR: Why don't you describe what a locker plant is.

KT: You go out and kill a beef on the farm and bring them in, then hang them and age them as long as the customer wants, then you cut, wrap and freeze, quick freeze it and shove them into these lockers and people rent the locker, you issue them a key, they come in and get meat as they want to. That's basically what it was, we were cutting and storing meat, we weren't selling meat. We were just processing meat. That's what all the lockers did. They had them all around the valley at that time. Well, they are about all gone now, you know.

JR: So you were basically providing a service for Chandler farmers that had cattle?

KT: Yes, I killed beef as far as Maricopa. I had a lot of customers in Queen Creek. I had customers from Mesa and Tempe, in this area. I went all the way to Paradise Valley to kill beef. But that wasn't very often. You had to fight too much traffic. We stayed busy here, I quit 11 years ago in January and I rented it out to another guy from Mesa, named Ferraby and he rented it two or three years and this is not an agrarian area anymore, he was going to have to go too far to get the beef so he finally bought a place in Maricopa and we just closed it out then. Now it's a church. A Black church.

JR: What's the address?

KT: 260 S. Arizona Avenue.

JR: Did you have a little grocery store or something?

KT: In the beginning we had a store in the front of the building. Then we ran that for maybe 20 years. We got out of that business over 30 years ago and just concentrated on the locker. We sublet the front out for a little furniture store, two or three little deals, whatever they wanted, different people came in and out. Second hand stuff, new stuff. We operated out of the back anyway. Right out of the alley because that's where we brought beef in to it.

JR: Can you tell me a little bit about the process that's involved with actually slaughtering the cattle?

KT: We would kill on the ranch, we'd shoot them. We used to dress them, everything but skin them on the ranch. The Wholesome Meat Act came into effect in the 60's sometime and you couldn't dress in the field unless you had a refrigerated truck and skin them and put them in the refrigerated truck. It wasn't practical to skin them because once you skin them if a whirlwind came along you had dust all over them and it just wasn't a good thing to do. I went before the livestock board in Phoenix and a fellow by the name of Dr. Perlhall was a federal inspector for this area and I helped convince him we were allowed to slaughter them and bring them in to dress them inside where we had hot and cold running water and a clean place to dress beef. He says, "I can get that through Washington", and he did. At that time they had closed over 100 plants in Iowa at one fell swoop for the same thing. But we got a by in Arizona so we would just shoot the beef, bleed them and bring them in. We usually had them dressed within the hour. We would dress first then skin them.

We had a good operation, I had an electric hoist on the truck, I had power equipment once I got them in I would dress them. I had air de-hider, a little deal where you could skin them, a power spreader where you could spread and split them. I could handle an 1,000-pound animal by myself in 20-25 minutes. I could dress it, skin it and split it and have it on the scales in less than 30 minutes. In the end I wasn't doing a lot of killing I had another man kill them and bring them in and I would dress them, that's all we would do. I helped dress between 25,000 and 30,000 beef and thousands of hogs and hundreds of sheep and a lot of goats, but primarily beef and hogs.

We used to cure a ton of ham and bacon a week, I was curing for several other plants, but we'd run 500 pounds a night in the smokehouse Monday - Thursday and we got so we wouldn't work on Saturday so we didn't smoke on Friday night but we'd smoke Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. It was a hard business, a hard way to make a living, but I educated all my kids and I even sent my wife back to college. She had two years of college when we got married and she ended up being a teacher so the business paid off, but it was a hard way to make a living. But if you didn't have an education that's what you did. My kids, I made them work there when they were teenagers starting to go to school, they couldn't wait to get out of that place they knew there were easier ways to get by.

JR: I don't know a lot about the beef industry and how that works, when you cure meat, what's the process for that?

KT: It's the same as anything else. We handled all beef the same. They would come in and tell us how long they wanted them to hang and we'd try to hang them that long. Like I did a lot for Bogle, you know, Jack Bogle just passed away this year. He wanted his to hang two to three weeks so we would do it. We would cut it any way that wanted, wrap it any way they wanted, freeze it and call them to come and get it. Hogs, we would make the sausage, we would cure the ham and bacon

and slice it or do what ever they wanted there. Most people didn't render lard, that's passé, a thing of the past. But some people did, so for awhile I had a big lard rendering vat and we used to render lard for people. But not many people wanted it, they wanted shortening, not lard, they didn't want animal fat. We were doing a lot of curing even when we left there. Like I said, I left there almost 11 years ago.

JR: What about smoking?

KT: That's part of the process, pump the hams, pull out the artery, artery pump with a compressor deal, pump it, that would be the curing; put it back for a week or ten days then bring it out and hang it in the smokehouse to smoke it.

JR: When you first started the meat locker plant who were your main customers as far as in Chandler, who were the main people that had livestock?

KT: Several people had feed yards but we were doing more for individuals, people that raised one for their own use. Bogle was the biggest customer in town they had a big feed operation. Later Hughes and Ganns had an enormous feed operation in Queen Creek. They're all gone now. But individually they would just call us up and we had dozens of customers we'd kill for year after year, not only Chandler, but Queen Creek, Tempe, Maricopa. We used to have people bring hogs to us all the way from Ajo, down by Tuscan. They'd bring them to us and we'd kill them right there inside.

JR: How much did you charge?

KT: That's a tough one. I think we were charging probably 18 or 20 cents a pound to process on whatever they weighed. We used to charge \$20 to kill an animal and we kept the hide, the hide was worth something. But in the end we may have raised the price. An average beef could come to somewhere around \$120-\$125 to process it, we'd go get it, kill it and bring it in and process it.

JR: I know you have a hobby doing photography, I'm curious about how you got started doing that?

KT: I was reading a book in study session in Popular Photography Magazine at Phoenix Union and I looked at the pictures and I thought that looked like fun. I bought a cheap camera and then I bought another camera. I finally went to work when I got out of school in 1942. Sears and Roebuck had a photography department when they were downtown Phoenix and I bought a camera there, a 35mm and I had trouble with it. I started to develop my own stuff in the bathroom at home and I took it back and said there's something wrong with this camera, it doesn't work. Well, he took it and tried it and said, "No, there's nothing wrong with it, you are doing something wrong". So I ruined several more rolls of film.

Finally I went back and by this time I was really mad, this guy was gone, I asked to see the manager, I went up on the third floor at Sears and they got the manager and she came back down and said this camera had been to the photo shop two or three times, this guy had lied to me, so they offered me my money back, I said "No, I paid \$70 for the camera, I'll take that one on the shelf". It was \$129, I'll be back when I get paid on Saturday, I came back and paid them and took it.

I didn't know it was a cut film camera, I didn't know anything about cut film, you had to have holders. I went over to the photo shop on North Central in Phoenix and they told me how to use it and I bought some more holders and I bought some film and I was in the cut film business, whether I wanted to be or not. Like I say, that's been 62 years ago and I've been in it ever since. I bought better and bigger cameras but I always stayed with cut film.

JR: What do you like to photograph?

KT: Mostly scenery. I made trips to southern Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, I photographed in Canada, I photographed in Alaska, I've been to Europe four times photographing, been to Taiwan and Thailand photographing. Whenever I go on a trip I take the camera. I got a little folding hand truck where I roll the camera equipment because it's heavy. But I've got pictures from everywhere. I've got a good size darkroom now, I've lived in the same house for 56 years, I turned the carport into a darkroom. I've got one little room where I process film and a much bigger room where I print. I've got a little deep freeze in there with 3500 or 4000 color negatives. You have to freeze color negatives. A couple years ago Eastman changed that, you don't have to freeze anymore. I'm not putting anymore in there but I have a load of them in there right now. I've got a very crude filing system when I want to dig out a picture like the one I did for the golf tournament this week. I've got to find that picture and print it. That is what's keeping me from climbing the walls since my wife passed away. It's a good hobby especially if you are a family man, you are home all the time.

JR: Have you exhibited your photographs anywhere?

KT: I do everything, I develop and make up to 16 x 20's, that's as big as my processor will make. I make Christmas cards, I send a lot of stuff to Alaska. We went on tours with people from Alaska for five years. I make little calendars, anything to keep me busy.

JR: Let's talk a little bit about your political career here in Chandler. Prior to getting involved in politics, were you on any city commissions or boards?

KT: I got involved because there was an argument on the Council just like there is now. We have a divided Council now. One guy quit and they had to appoint somebody and a friend of mine was on the Council and he said, "I'm going to suggest they appoint you". And they did and they put me on the Council and that was 1963 or 1964. I didn't particularly want to be on it but I did and I stayed. I knew most of the people on the council then. So I was on the Council off and on for a little over 11 years.

JR: What kept your interest on the Council?

KT: Well, I had a business and they were going to wipe out our parking, we had angular parking on South Arizona Avenue, the state didn't want that, they controlled that road, they wanted parallel parking and make the road wider, so we argued about that a little bit. I served on the Council for two years and I didn't get paid. We didn't get paid then, then they passed an ordinance for councilmen to get paid but you had to go through an election before you got paid and I didn't get paid until the third year on there.

I think I made \$50/month, and I served until 1970 and I became enamored with George Nader who was the Mayor and I ran against him, well, he beat me by, I think, 55 votes, we had a real horse race, you know. So I went off the Council for four years and then somebody kept yelling at me to get back on, so I ran again, I was elected in 74 and I always did good as a councilman, whenever I ran I got more votes than anybody else, I didn't do as good as Mayor. So then I served for a couple years and quit and ran for Mayor in 1976.

JR: Now while you were serving on the City Council what were some of the important issues that were going on at that time?

KT: Oh, we had a lot of things going on, we had a battle, Gilbert wanted us to de-annex that area at Elliott and Arizona Avenue. They wanted that corner, the reason they wanted it, Elliott was the main road going into downtown Gilbert from the west and there wasn't a lot in downtown Gilbert then, you know, you are going back almost 40 years. They wanted Elliott because it connected to Arizona Avenue which became Country Club ½ mile north of Mesa and it also connected with the freeway out of I-10 because there were no freeways in Gilbert. That would have been the busiest intersection in Gilbert had we given it to them but we didn't do it.

Then we had problems with Tempe, they were extending I-60 to Tempe; Tempe didn't want it going any further east. I remember Bill Reem, who was a long time city councilman in Tempe, we don't want those hundreds of cars from Mesa and Apache Junction being funneled through Tempe every morning and night. Yet (Mesa Mayor) Wayne Pomeroy thought it was absolutely essential he gets a relief from traffic; after all, the cities from Holbrook to Yuma or Flagstaff to Tucson all had interstates and or freeways going through the middle of town. Mesa, one of the biggest cities in the state, didn't have either. Tempe eventually lost that battle.

Of course when I was off the council in the 70's I happened to be in a meeting one time sitting in the crowd and a fellow by the name of Presley came to address the council, I forget his first name, but it wasn't Elvis, I know that. He was a developer and he was going to develop the west side of I 10 south of the South Mountains, which eventually became Ahwatukee. He came to Chandler for water. Of course water sales traditionally are major source of revenue for cities. We had the water and the wherewithal to deliver it and once the water mains go there the city boundaries soon follow, cities expand that way quite often. For some reason he became disenchanted with Chandler and I didn't know what it was until later but he went to Phoenix and Phoenix allowed him to have the water. Some time after that Phoenix annexed a narrow strip down the west side of I 10 all the way to the reservation and Ahwatukee was born, which is really a tragedy in some sense because long time residents in that area—like the Colliers, the Gates, we call that west Chandler, and Goldmans—oh there's all kind of people out there that are more Chandler than Phoenix oriented. You know now, it's all Phoenix.

An interesting side story, when they moved in there to develop the land, Goldman had a large dairy on the peripheral early construction right along the Indian

reservation north side of the boundary, when they moved heavy equipment to level the land, build the streets, lay the water and sewer lines, desert intruders, better known as rattlesnakes moved into Goldman's corral. Goldman was a good customer of ours, all those people out there were. Holsteins, they are inquisitive animals, they bent down to sniff the intruder and invariably got bitten on the nose. There wasn't enough venom to kill an animal that large but the milk production dropped dramatically and never came back. Consequently, animals worth well in excess of \$1,000 a piece had to be slaughtered. I learned later that one of the councilmen talked down to Presley. He was used to talking down to people and Presley wasn't used to answering questions; he was used to asking them. He got disenchanted with Chandler and went to Phoenix, he didn't like that treatment is what I hear. Otherwise, that could have all been Chandler. Chandler could have been another 150,000 bigger. But I think we are probably big enough anyway.

JR: Now was that in the early 70's?

KT: Yes.

JR: What about when you were on council were there any important issues that were happening in Chandler?

KT: We had several deals. We needed a storm drainage down Arizona Avenue and before I was councilman, I can remember more things. Back in the 60's we built the city hall which is now the public works. That stuff was built when I was on the council, I remember that. That was a major deal for us we had to hire a city manager and I remember George Nader asked me to call Gale Christy who was the Assistant Manager in Tempe. Rowd Sanders, who owned Sanders Aviation out by Guadalupe, he was on the Tempe Council, and he told me that Gale Christy was a diamond in the rough. So I called Gale and he was being paid \$12,000/year and we hired him for \$13,000. He came to Chandler and he was an outstanding City Manager. He finally left and went to Colorado, got a better job in a bigger city. They had to hire another one. We had problems hiring city managers all the time. We had one that wasn't happy with George Nader or Andy Kuhls, Andy Kuhl was the Mayor then. He went to Phoenix, that's a problem all councils have to live with.

We put in the storm drain, that was a major problem because you couldn't put the water in the SRP drainage canal. We made a deal with the school system to build a (water retention) deal down there at the Frye Road school, which is now San Marcos. We had a lot of little things going on but I can't remember if it was major or something else. Margaret Hance was the Mayor of Phoenix, and I remember reading the paper, about when they annexed that strip to cut west Chandler. The rationale was, the little towns, they bleed us—that's the way she put it. Which made me madder than hell. I fired a letter off to her and told her that every cylinder of Freon, every roll of paper, every electric motor comes out of Chandler, same applies in Glendale, Scottsdale, Tempe, Tolleson – Phoenix wouldn't be the metropolitan it is today without the little towns around you. I said, "Margaret, we don't bleed you, we feed you." You know she never answered me, but we had a meeting in the Mayor's office conference room, I think it was on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor in downtown Phoenix. One time when I was on MAG, I used to be treasurer of MAG, and she didn't represent them, I think Joy

Carter was the Vice Mayor, and she represented the city for MAG; but I was sitting in the back waiting for the meeting to start when she came all the way back to shake hands with me, I remember that. She never mentioned the letter. In my opinion she was the best Mayor Phoenix had up until that time. She may have been the best Mayor Phoenix ever had.

JR: Were there any positive changes that happened while you were on council?

KT: We had a lot of positive changes, of course a lot of negative too. The landfill was one that got a lot of people mad when we built the landfill that's just getting ready to close. That was farming area out there then you know, 25-35 years ago. No one thought the town would grow like it did. I think Chandler, at the time I was Mayor, was 29,000. But we had a lot of positive things, I can't think of any off hand but I'm sure we had some.

We made deals with the school, we built the swimming pool in the school, before we had one in town at all. We did some things with the school system and of course, the Center for the Arts too. I don't know, we had, I'm trying to think what was built then, I can't remember when I was in there, because it overlapped between the time I went in and the time I left, there was almost a 15 year span from the time I started. We had a pretty good council, we only had one dissenter when they came into the recall, which was a major problem, the rest of us were pretty much together on that.

Jim Patterson was on the council, Phil Dueñas, Dick Strickman, Raul Navarette, myself, and who in the world else was on the council? Sidney Nischon was a dissenter on that, he was unhappy. I can't think of who the other Councilman was. Oh, Jimmy, his dad had the automobile dealership on North Arizona Avenue. I can't think of his last name. He worked for Patterson, when Patterson was at the Empire, as far as I know he's still there. We had a good Council, we had a good manager, Bruce Knutson was the Manager, we didn't have much dissent on the council like they do now. They got real problems now you know. But I have worked on diversified Councils, back in the 60's, George Nader and Andy Kuhls didn't get along too well, and George finally beat Andy for Mayor. George became the first Mayor elected by the people [up until that time the Council appointed the Mayor]. But other than that it was a good Council, I had no problems there. The recall was a real problem, there's no question about that. People would stand up and argue and most of them didn't know what they were talking about. But they kept us there until midnight sometimes.

JR: I'm curious about that recall, how did that get started?

KT: Probably they were unhappy with the police chief, a lot of them were, some of the policemen. They were wanting binding arbitration where they could form a union and argue with the council. We were against binding arbitration because it allowed the employees to strike against the city. We didn't think you should have a right to strike against the city. We argued against that. They weren't happy about that. They brought in the Phoenix Police Union to come over and argue for them. Then they brought in the state organization and the Fraternal Order of the

Police was arguing against it. It's was primarily the police department that got it started. They brought in a guy to help them, he had been a union organizer in New Jersey or somewhere, his wife taught school in Chandler, I don't know what he was doing, but he was brought in to help set up a recall against all of us because we wouldn't bend to their wishes. They wanted Bill Loughlin fired. Then they wanted the city manager fired. They were both outstanding public servants and we wouldn't go along with that. They eventually both got fired, once I went out, they both got fired. Which was a real tragedy. The guy that beat me, Jerry Maxwell, he was in the police reserve and he stirred up so much trouble he was kicked out, Loughlin kicked him out. Anyway, he went in against me and Jerry got in and of course, Patterson beat him in eight months. He didn't last a year, recall was in May and Patterson beat him in January.

JR: The recall was May, 1979?

KT: Yes.

JR: So you served as Mayor from 1976 – 1979. So when the recall happened, you were also recalled as part of that?

KT: Yes, they took four of us out. If they could have only taken three of us out, things wouldn't have changed on the council, they took four of us out and that's how they fired the city manager for not firing the police chief, they fired the police chief, everybody was gone.

JR: So when you decided to run for Mayor, why did you want to run for Mayor, what made you decide to do that?

KT: The first time I ran, George Nader had a deal going that I criticized him on. He had a girlfriend, he eventually married her; left his wife and married her. I'd criticize him for that, not that my morals were any higher than his, at least I wasn't doing anything when I was in a public office. He beat me and he was Mayor for two more years and then he didn't run anymore. Raul Navarette ran, you know. You had to run every two years then. Then when I went back on the council again in 1974, Raul couldn't run anymore, his term was up, so they thought I should run, so I did. I was elected then and I ran again I was elected again. That's how I got into it.

JR: So you decided to run for Mayor the second time because you were encouraged to do so, people asked you to?

KT: No, the recall didn't start until after I was Mayor the second time.

JR: But when you ran for Mayor the second time, was it because you wanted to see some changes or just because.....?

KT: Well, we had a few things going. We had a good council and I knew I could only run two more years anyway. There was nobody else to step in and run. There was nobody ready to go and take up the job. So I ran. But I'm a firm believer in term limits. I don't believe you should hold that job forever.

JR: Now, when you ran for Mayor in 1976, what was Chandler like? Can you describe Chandler and what it was like in 1976?

KT: It was probably a better place to raise your kids than it is now. It was a nice little community, it was an agrarian community. Farming was still in very close because we were doing a good business killing beef close in then. But we could see what was coming. Even then we could see what was coming. We knew the place was going to grow. Because Tempe wasn't reaching build out then but their boundaries were well defined. They were locked in with Phoenix on the west, Scottsdale on the north, Mesa on the east and Chandler on the south. They could only go south at that time. So we knew we were going to get the run over from there. When Scottsdale started to grow I got a lot of business from the dairy moving out of Scottsdale to Chandler, now they are all moving to Casa Grande. I don't know where they are going to go from Casa Grande because Casa Grande is starting to grow.

We could see that we were going to grow, we had room to grow then. When I left we had a few housing deals going in. I can remember when my brother built his house right across the San Marcos on West Buffalo, he was [one of] the first house[s] [on West Buffalo Street], and that was in 1942. I can remember Lynn Williams, he ran the Chandler Arizonian, coming to interview him about building a house, they were going to put it in the paper, there were no houses being built. It was a news item in 1942. Chandler was a nice place to live. It was a small town. Basha's had a grocery store right downtown. There was a little store right across the way over there, just a little walk-in market was there. Up on the north where Baugh's had a market right where Checker just moved out of on Arizona Avenue. But Basha's was the big store, and I really think it was a mistake made when they moved Basha's out; they generated more foot traffic downtown than anybody else. Now we don't have too many things generating foot traffic anymore. We don't even have a Post Office there around the square anymore. I think it's going to be a hard sell to get this downtown going again. Don't you?

JR: Maybe and maybe not.

KT: I think if we get the Maricopa County Court system in here, maybe build another city hall here and maybe build a museum, it will help. It's real handy to go out there where Wal-Mart built that store, my bank is out there now. It's a tough sell but I hope it goes.

JR: While you were serving as Mayor did you have a certain vision for Chandler?

KT: Not a lot. I probably couldn't see the forest for the trees. We had a planner that had a vision. Ed Gussio came in. He had been in Baltimore and he came in and had a lot of good ideas. I can remember one of our major planning areas even before I was Mayor was in the northwest part of town. Warner Road where it ran out to Alma School, there's a trailer park there on this side. That was suppose to be one of our major master plan areas. They came to build that trailer park here and Raul Navarette came to me and says, "Look, we can't afford to have a trailer park there, that's one of the key areas for the growth of our city". So we had to have two meetings on that deal to establish it. Dick Strickland had voted for it. Bill Speights had voted for it, the trailer park. Raul voted against it. I think I voted for it the first time. George Nader voted for it.

Gene Ellsworth had voted for it. Raul says, "Look, we can't let that thing go through, can you do anything about it?" I said, "Well, I'll talk to Bill Speights". So I talked to Bill Speights and got him to change his vote. So that left three of us. So Raul says, "I'll talk to the city clerk and have her to call your vote, my vote, Bill Space's vote, against putting a trailer park there". Then we'll have the Mayor called because the Mayor always wants to be on the winning side in any council, and we'll see how George votes in the face of three "no" votes against him. George Nader voted against it, Dick Strickland went with him, Gene Ellsworth went with him and I'm trying to think of the fourth councilman.... Anyway we lost the vote. The town was growing enough we got enough building developments without worrying about the trailer park. It's still there. I go by it all the time.

JR: Yes, it's an old one. What's it called? Is it Wishing Well or something like that, it has some kind of name to it.

JR: During your political career, were there any significant events that affected Chandler? We talked about some in relation to some issues with Gilbert, some issues with Tempe, were there any other significant events?

KT: The biggest significant event, and that happened when I was Vice-Mayor when Rogers came in, that was in the 40's. They came in here from Connecticut, they rented a building in the 200 block of S. Arizona Avenue. They took an option on some land on S. Dobson Road, south of Williams Field Road on the west side of Dobson. They wanted to build a plant and they needed security which they couldn't get the way they wanted in the building. They had to maintain the atmospheric pressure within the building greater than the outside air so they would exhaust rather than suck in dust. But they wouldn't build that plant until Dobson was paved. Dobson was just a dirt country lane then south of Williams Field Road.

I can remember George Nader asking me to talk to supervisor Pat Riggs about getting it paved. I didn't know Pat Riggs, didn't know how to get a hold of him, didn't know if he would talk to me if I did. So I called his brother, Ben Riggs, I knew Ben, he referred me to his younger son, Reid. He says, "talk to Reid". Apparently Reid had a good rapport with his Uncle Pat. So I called Reid, through Reid I got to the County Engineer. That was the guy I needed to talk to in the first place. He said, "We gave him that". I said, "Yes, but they want it in writing or they won't build". So they put it in writing and the county eventually paved Dobson Road and Rogers went in.

Then came General Instrument, then came suppliers for the industry, Motorola, Gould came in and eventually Intel. For that reason we have a higher family income here than they do in Scottsdale. It's due to high tech companies, no question about that. They pay more than most and they don't pollute the area. Getting that started was one of the major things we got going. I had very little to do with it but I was on the council.

JR: Did Rogers come in about 66-67, something like that?

KT: Yes, in the 60's.

JR: What kind of trait did it take to be a leader while you were Mayor?

KT: I'm not sure I understand that question.

JR: While you were serving as Mayor, what kind of personality characteristics do you think it took to be a good leader as Mayor?

KT: You probably had to be a little more egotistical than the average person coming down the road I think. I think George and Andy had that trait better than I did. Patterson is probably the best Mayor Chandler ever had and he didn't have it. There was nothing egotistical about Jim and you know that. He was dogmatic in his approach. I remember he was sitting next to me, he would drive me crazy when he was sitting next to me when I was Mayor, throwing in his two cents worth. I remember we were talking about raising taxes one time and I was afraid to raise taxes, it gets everybody madder than hell at you. Jim says, "No, we got to raise taxes". He didn't care. He said, "We gotta raise taxes". And we did raise taxes and got by with it but Jim didn't care what the outcome was, if it was the right thing to do and that's why he made a good Mayor, I thought. That's why I think he was the best Mayor. I think you had to have the interest of town at heart. I think you had to live in the community and I think a good Mayor needs to make his living in the community. That's one thing I did, I made my living in the community. There are a lot of attributes, whether ones I described are the best or not, your guess is good as mine.

JR: What were some of your major accomplishments while you were Mayor?

KT: I'm not sure there were any major accomplishments. We got the storm drain system down through the middle of town, which was a good one. That wasn't finished until Jim was Mayor. It was already in the works, we had to lobby, I remember going over to lobby the highway department. They had too many places to spend their money. They didn't want to spend it in Chandler. I remember talking to one of the guys on the board he was an automobile dealer in Buckeye at the time, we're going back 25-30 years, I remember telling him, "you need to do some work in Chandler we got problems on Arizona Avenue". He finally agreed to do it. I cornered him in Paradise Valley we had a meeting at the city hall and he was there, it was a MAG meeting but he was there and he agreed to do something and so we got the storm drain going down through the middle of town which helped the downtown area.

Of course the city hall was built before I was Mayor. I really don't know what we did altogether, you are asking me questions of a quarter of a century ago and I can't remember what happened last week. Zoning was a major thing and it still is. We zoned some property like we were talking about zoning for the trailer park, we zoned some property that were very important, I thought but to try to nail down what was most important, I have no idea.

JR: How would you describe Chandler in comparison to other local cities?

KT: Chandler is a better place to live than most of them. I think it's a better place to live than Tempe. I'm sure it's a better place to live than Glendale. I think it's better than Scottsdale. Houses are expensive here but I'm sure not more expensive than Scottsdale and Paradise Valley. Chandler has lost its small town flavor by now. This high tech deal we have got going out there is really a plus for Chandler. This Intel move is tremendous. Our annual income per capita is

greater than Scottsdale on account of Intel and Motorola and of course, I'm sure they help bring places like the big bank addition out there, Wells Fargo. We have probably as high an educated workforce as anybody. That was another thing that was a major problem going back far as Mayor, was building a sewer plant. We built that on a reservation. Under the water laws in Arizona most people back east don't understand them, the water stays with the land, and that includes sewers. So you couldn't pump water out of the district. We tried to get water to the airport, and SRP hit us with a junction immediately, we couldn't cross Germann Road, we couldn't get water to the airport. Of course when we went on the reservation; SRP is a quasi governmental entity and of course, the reservation is controlled by the Interior Department so that got us water out there because they were both under the government and we were allowed to build on the reservation.

I remember, I think, who was the Secretary of Interior then, Stewart Udall was Secretary of Interior, I think then. I remember him coming to the San Marcos and having a press conference about the time we were getting ready to do it. He's the guy that got it through. The reporters of this area weren't used to querying a cabinet member, so they all stood around. George Nader was sitting at the table with him, Stewart Udall was there, and a reporter, and he was just waiting for questions. They didn't know what to ask him. I remember him saying, "There's nothing so nice as a press conference where there are no questions". That was a real good deal when we got that, we broke the hole on transferring water out of the district. It's no problem any more.

JR: What do you feel has made Chandler the city that it is today?

KT: Its geographical location has helped, there's no question about that. Because Mesa couldn't go further south without hitting us, they'd run into Gilbert over there, they'd run into Scottsdale north, that's helped. We've had some good city councils that had the interest in this community at heart, they made their living here and believed in the town growing. That has helped. The San Marcos helped. A lot of people came to the San Marcos and saw what was here. The people that stayed at the San Marcos had influence, financial and otherwise.

Our closeness to the reservation hasn't hurt us; we've always had a good rapport with them. I can remember traveling down there to meet with them. I remember Bruce Knutsen and Eddie Basha and I went down to talk to the Governor one time. I can remember the Governor had a hat lying on the desk and Basha said, "that's a nice hat". He picked it up and looked at it. All he did was look at the size then he sent him a 6 or 7x beaver. He knew how to take care of the Governor to help us along the way. We've always had a good rapport with the Indians, I think that helps. A myriad of things, none of them gigantic, but all of them helped a little to help Chandler become the city it is today I think. Also the nearness to Phoenix has helped us all. I can remember Phoenix only had 48,000 people, they only had 65,000 in 1940. It had 122,000 in 1950. Then it really went after that.

JR: If you were to look ahead to 2012, which is our city centennial year, what do you think Chandler will be like in 2012?

KT: It's going to be bigger but not a lot bigger because it's about to build out. I think build out is seven years. It's going to be a better town but we've got to do something downtown. They're generating more sales tax right there on the southeast corner of Pecos and Arizona Avenue than they ever did downtown right now. Then they are getting ready to build right across to the west. Everything gravitates to the freeway. I don't know, I think the zoning is pretty well locked in out past there to Gilbert Road. The town is going to be bigger, but not a lot bigger. If we can get something going downtown to save the downtown area, but you know there is only one Scottsdale. I'm not sure it will ever generate as much sales tax as it once did. Sales tax is the lifeblood of any city. I've got no idea, your guess is much better than mine.

JR: Do you think there are going to be any new things in Chandler?

KT: I'm sure there will. I've got not idea what they are going to be. I was ribbing the Mayor about Google awhile ago, I said, "You screwed up on Google". He said, "We gave them everything they wanted, we answered all their questions and stayed back". I think the Mayor probably made a good move. I don't think they want to be pressured too much.

JR: In 2012, what do you think will be gone from Chandler?

KT: I've got no ideas. I think we'll have a new museum. Apparently the Maricopa Court system is coming here. Also a new city hall. We're going to build those apartments over there but those people will have to travel a ways to get their groceries, which is regrettable. Basha's is not downtown anymore. But you can buy groceries a mile in either direction I guess. I'm sure downtown is going to change. I'm sure they will tear out a lot of those buildings on the east side of Arizona Avenue toward Pecos Road. Your guess is as good as mine.

JR: What do you think it will happen to agriculture?

KT: There won't be any in Chandler, there's not much left anymore. There's not going to be any in Gilbert. Gilbert at one time was the hay bailing capital of the world, not any more. Gilbert has extended all the way to Chandler Heights, hasn't it? I think it's annexed to Chandler Heights. There's not going to be any farming in this valley and of course for years SRP has been selling more water to municipalities than they have to farming. Of course farming used more water than municipalities. I think Yuma will be the major farming area in Arizona. It will also move to Pinal County.

JR: How should Chandler's history be preserved?

KT: It was an agricultural county at one time and moved to be high tech and I think high tech is great. That's the best thing that ever happened to this town. Because agriculture goes, what fills the vacuum? Nothing better than an industry that doesn't pollute, pays higher than average wages. We haven't become a complete bedroom community. Bedroom communities don't pay the tax. They don't pay enough tax to run the school system. High tech does. We're in a good position there. Everything grew around Phoenix, I guess weather brought that on. I can remember people saying about 50 years ago, if we ever get refrigerator units, AC's cheap enough to put in the average home being built this place is going to boom. When I bought my house all you had was swamp boxes. Now you don't

build a house with swamp boxes anymore, ACs got cheap enough. People make enough money to afford it.

JR: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

KT: I told you everything I know already and then some. It's been a pleasure talking to you.