TEMPE HISTORICAL MUSEUM

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #: OH-275

NARRATOR: Bob Ellis

INTERVIEWER: Aaron Monson

DATE: June 24, 2008

BE = Bob Ellis
INT = Interviewer
_____ = Unintelligible
(Italics) = Transcriber's notes

Side A

INT: Interview for the Tempe Historical Museum on June 24, 2008. I'm here with Bob Ellis, former station manager for ASU Channel 8 KAET. Let's begin.

Can you tell me, when did you first come to ASU, and what made you choose ASU as an employer?

BE: I came to ASC, Arizona State College, in 1947. I was in the service—got an honorable discharge, by the way—and came out to Tempe and Phoenix to visit my sister, who had married a native of this area. And while I was here, a friend that I went to high school with was in the Papago Veterans Hospital with rheumatic fever, and he told me he was going to take advantage of the G.I. Bill and go to Arizona State College. And that was something that I was interested in doing, but not here; I was from Ohio.

But anyway, I went over and enrolled, and I loved it. It was a small school, there were about 2,500 students, half of us were veterans. And if you wanted to be in the debate team or the choir, even if you wanted to play football or basketball, you probably would get a shot at it. So I was able to do nearly everything I wanted to do at Arizona State College. I was on the debate team, I was in the choir, I also was vice president of the student body. So it was a wonderful experience for me, and I graduated in 1953.

INT: And after you graduated?

BE: I was in the drama workshop at Arizona State, probably in ten or twelve plays, and I decided to go to Los Angeles and see if I could get into either the television or the movie business. And at that time, in '53, there was a stalemate in what was being produced, both in New York and L.A. They really didn't know where they were going with the movie industry or television, so it was difficult to get an assignment anywhere.

I had a friend at KPHO Television who told me that there was an opening for an announcer, so I came back to Phoenix, I auditioned, and got the job at KPHO. And they said, "You'll start Monday"—this was on a Friday—and I said, "I'm working over on the coast, and I've got to let them have two weeks' notice." They said, "No, just a week." So I went back and gave notice. I was working at Northrup Aviation in Hawthorne.

I came back, and they had hired somebody else. In those days, there was no equal rights system to protest that, so I went down the street to KOY, went in and talked with the program director and part-owner, Jack Williams—who later became Governor of the State of Arizona, by the way—and they gave me an audition, they were going into the television business, and I got a job. And I stayed at KOY from 1953 until 1959, when I went to Arizona State College, and then I worked part-time for them.

But the best part of all of that was not my experience at KOY announcing or writing news. It was finding a wife. Frankie Jo Lanter *(sp?)* was head of continuity at KOY, and we started dating, and we married in 1954, and I got her job—I became head of continuity. (laughter) But we've been together for 54 years now.

INT: Very nice. What are some of the changes that you've seen happen at ASU since you arrived?

BE: Well, as I say, it was a very small school in 1947. The changes are so many-fold that it's hard to compare. One campus, 2,400 students; now you've got five campuses, 64,000 students—that in itself is mind-boggling. But also the program areas have changed. It was a college, it was a teachers college more than anything else. And it wasn't until Homer Durham came along that we were able to have it called a university and also have more than one college. Homer started the College of Law, and Liberal Arts became a college, Education was a college, Business. So all of that has changed. And when I go over there today, I do recognize some of the places where I used to live, but they are occupied by Biochemical buildings and other things. It's a wonderful campus, and it's changed immensely.

INT: So how would you describe the effects of the growth at ASU?

BE: I think you can look at the growth of either the Phoenix area, Arizona, or ASU, and have some idea about how the whole state has mushroomed. People coming from places like Minnesota to live here, and our population—I don't know what it was in 1947, but now in the Phoenix metropolitan area, it's four million people. It's a huge, huge city. So that has changed along with the university.

INT: What would you say was the biggest challenge that you faced as the station manager at KAET?

BE: I inherited the station. Now, you have to remember that when we're talking about things that took place nearly fifty years ago, accurate reflections are not possible. But I think

the biggest challenge that I had was attempting to take on the station and build it into a fulltime operation. If you want me to expand on that, I can.

INT: Absolutely.

BE: A little bit of history. The first station to go on the air in Phoenix was KPHO-TV, that was Channel 5. And shortly after they went on the air, the FCC, Federal Communications Commission, put a freeze on all television applications throughout the whole United States. The only allocations that were available were VHF allocations, Very High Frequency allocations; those are the stations that range from Channels 2 through 12. Commercial stations allocated to the metropolitan Phoenix area were Channels 3, 10, and 12 in Mesa. And the non-commercial allocation was Channel 8. Now you have to go back and take a look at educational television to see why Channel 8 came into being. And this is a long story, so forgive me, it's not in a 30-second bite at all.

The first non-commercial educational station that went on the air was Houston, KUHT in Houston. After that went on the air, some forty or fifty stations followed, one of which was KUAT at the University of Arizona in Tucson; they began broadcasting in 1959. The concept then was that the educational stations would present educational programming, and that would include elementary, middle school, and high school classes, and university courses. As you know, that's not the prime programming for these stations today, and there's a reason for that. The station allocation, although available, was very difficult to put on the air, because, well . . . .

The man that pioneered it was Dr. Richard Bell, and he was a professor at the university in the Mass Communications department, and he spent several years trying to get the station on the air at ASU. He was a pioneer, and he succeeded, he managed to get the station on the air. And if you want to, I can go into some detail about that.

INT: Sure; why don't you elaborate a little bit?

BE: Okay. The university, as I remember, had said, "Okay, we'll try and put a station on the air, but there are conditions. First of all, we don't have the funding for the equipment—you're going to have to go out and get the necessary funding. And we also don't know how to apply for a license—you're going to have to make the application, file for the station, and we'll help."

There was another gentleman that was working with Dick Bell at that time, his name was Jim Loper. Loper was in my class at ASC in 1953. Jim went to graduate school at USC *(University of Southern California)* and never returned to the campus here. He came back to the campus for alumni reunions, but not to be involved in the station.

I believe that in order to obtain the approval from the Board of Regents, there were two interesting aspects of that. One was, there was no allocation in Tempe for an educational television station; the allocation is in Phoenix. People think that it's Tempe; no. After

the station was on the air, we were able to operate from Tempe, with the permission of the FCC. Now, the other aspect of that is ASU doesn't own the station; the Board of Regents does. The Board of Regents is the legal entity for the university and the only one that could apply for the station. So you have these two things: the Board of Regents applying for the station for ASU, and it's licensed to Phoenix. Now, the third interesting aspect to that is Channel 8 is now going to move to downtown Phoenix. They will finally be in the city of the allocation; they won't have to operate with the permission of the FCC from Tempe. So that'll be interesting.

The other interesting thing is that Dr. Bill managed to get a grant from the McCune Foundation. I don't think they're in business anymore. I don't remember how much that was. I would guess it was about $80,000, and I can't tell you if it was gonna be paid in a lump sum or how, but it was a grant from them.

And he also got help from Channel 12. Channel 12 was the first one to move up to South Mountain. KPHO operated from the tower on the Westward Ho *(Hotel, in downtown Phoenix)*; they don't operate from that anymore. But Channel 12 moved up to the mountain. They were licensed to Mesa. And when they moved to the mountain, they had an old antenna and an old transmitter, and that's what we inherited from them, from Channel 12. The signal was very weak. They used to say it went down South Mountain and went into a few homes around South Mountain, that was it. (laughter)

But the station also was granted, from the Ford Foundation, a videotape machine. Every educational station that went on the air, for a number of years, got a tape machine from the Ford Foundation—one two-inch tape machine.

We had no network. The network was NET, National Educational Television, and it wasn't a network in the sense that we were interconnected; we weren't. So a program that was aired in New York might go to Washington, and then it would go from Washington to Duluth, and then come to Phoenix. So you couldn't do simultaneous broadcasting or even have a program log that looked simultaneous.

So that's the early days, and that's how Channel 8 got on the air. Dr. Bill managed to get the initial funding, and the university, Dr. Gammage, approved, and we went ahead.

INT: Very good. Now, aside from accomplishments in your tenure at ASU that you're proud of, what would you say was the biggest innovation that came out of your tenure at ASU?

BE: Color television. We were black and white. We didn't know how we were gonna be able to afford color television, but all the other stations in town had gone to color. And I went to Dr. Durham and offered to put a color television set in his home, and he said, "No, I'm not going to accept anything like that; I'll buy my own color television set," which he did. And after he experienced the color, he agreed.

The other interesting thing about Dr. Durham, he was somewhat of a wit. We had a program called "The Age of Kings," and one day he told me, "I can hear the kings, but I

can't see them," because our signal was so bad in Tempe. So at the same time we were gonna go color, we were going to expand the signal of the station. That worked out. We had to get other grants for that.

INT: Tell me one thing that you wish you could have accomplished while you were at ASU but, for whatever reason, could not.

BE: One of the things that I wanted to do was to change the call letters. The call letters stand for Arizona Educational Television, KAET, and I wanted to have KASU. Never was able to accomplish that, because an FM station at Arkansas State University had the call letters KASU, and they wouldn't grant it to us. So that's one of the things that I wish we could have accomplished. I didn't think that they would object to it, the FCC would object to it, but they did.

INT: Switching gears a little bit, what would you say today that ASU excels most at?

BE: Regarding the television station?

INT: It can be regarding both the television station or the university itself, if you can think of something from both?

BE: Of course, in the sports area, they've excelled in so many ways. And some of my friends played football for ASU. Frank Kush was one of my best, and is still one of my best friends. So I think the sports area, they made a name for the university, before they could do it academically.

And now, I get the ASU Research Magazine, and when I see what they're trying to accomplish in biological research, it really is kind of mind-boggling. A friend of mine, Milton Summerfield, is researching not fungus—what do you call those things that used to accumulate in our fish tanks?

INT: Algae?

BE: Algae, that's right. He's trying to find a method of taking algae that nobody really wants and make fuel out of it, and that's just one example. There's another example that I heard about, that it's very difficult in Africa to give shots to people, immunization shots. But if they could eat the material that's in the shots, that'd be good. So they're trying to grow tomatoes and potatoes with those chemicals in them, and if they're able to do that, people will eat them, rather than take these terrible shots. Of course, there's another problem—if you grow the potatoes here, how are you gonna ship them over there? The cost is probably too much to do that.

But, anyway, I think the whole area of . . . . I shouldn't say this, we haven't shifted away from the College of Education, we've just expanded on that. The College of Education is still strong there, and I'm most proud of the Walter Cronkite School; naturally, I taught over there. But my wife and I have a scholarship that we started some years ago, and I've

met the students, our scholarship recipients. They're so much better than I was when I was a student. (laughter) They're very, very good, and they've won a boukou of awards.

INT: Then, I would pose to you the same question, as well, specifically for the station. What would you say that the station excels at most today?

BE: Well, I'll tell you. I brought along some things for you to look at. I want you take a look, and I know we're doing this on radio, but I'll talk about it. That is the schedule that we went on the air with in 1961. Now, if you look at that schedule, you see we went on the air at 4:00 *(p.m.),* we went off the air at 9:30, we were not on the air on Saturdays and Sundays, we weren't on the air in the summertime, and it took a lot of effort.

But now you've got not just one station that's on the air, you've got three stations that are on the air from KAET; you've got KAET 8-1, 8-2, 8-3. And we've gone from the audiovisual telecourse and magic doorways and elementary Spanish into Nova and Masterpiece Theater and Horizon and the Arizona of the '70s and the '80s—not the '80s yet—the '50s, '60s and '70s.

We also did some very, very experimental programming—criticized for it, but we went ahead with it. One was open-heart surgery, I don't know if you're familiar with that. But one of our people, Chuck Allen—I'll talk about him in a minute, the programming genius—came in and said, "We've found out that Dr. Ted Dietrich teaches other doctors how to do a heart bypass operation." "Well, what do they do in a heart bypass operation?" "Well, they open the person's chest up, and they expose the heart, and then they repair the arteries around the heart, and then they put it all back together again." "Well, we're not going to do anything with that!" He said, "It's fascinating when you watch it." Well, the end result was, we did a live program of Dr. Dietrich doing a triple bypass operation. And in the studio, we had a doctor and our science director, Rick Dalley *(sp?),* they talked about what he was doing, and Dr. Dietrich talked about what he was doing. We had cameras in the hospital, we had cameras in the studio. That program—incidentally, the patient lived—that program has been seen worldwide. It's been seen in Germany, in Japan. And this was before the time when bypass operations were routine, this was very experimental. That's one of the programs we did that I thought was interesting.

The other one was Governor *(Evan)* Mecham's impeachment hearing. We were the station of record for that. We broadcast all of it, and told the other stations in town, "You can use any part of it." And then we also went back to Washington to do Justice *(Sandra Day)* O'Connor's Senate hearing.

So we did a lot of programming that I'm pretty proud of, expanding from semester-type of programming into exceptional educational programming. Now, why don't they do telecourses? They could. We put some on for awhile, at night, people could record them. You've got the internet now. I don't think it would be a waste of time to put telecourses on the air, but I don't think students would accept them. They will accept working on the internet, but not necessarily watching a Spanish course on television.

INT: Then I'll ask you the opposite question. What do you think is one of KAET's major weaknesses today?

BE: Well, the major weakness is funding, and it's disappearing, in a way. When we started asking people to contribute to the station, to "pledge to support your station," people responded. The university helped us out, too. We got support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. But we had a nucleus of members in the community that would contribute $40, $50, $100, $1,000 to the station. That's not as active now, from the community. I know they're pledging more, but these are tough times, these are very tough times—gasoline's four bucks a gallon, people know that their food is going up 20%—it's difficult for people to pledge to support their public television station. So that's the main problem I can see that they've had now.

INT: Then, in a little wider scope, what would you say is a major weakness at the university itself today?

BE: Well, I'd have to think about that a little bit. I don't know.

I used to think the major weakness was the school was getting too large to handle 60,000 students; I'm not convinced of that today. Because I see what they've done in the Honors College, I see the fact that we're not talking about a single campus—we're talking about Skysong, we're talking about Polytechnic, we're talking about West, we're talking about Downtown—so I can't say that the size of the university is a weakness.

I think the size of the facility may be a weakness. I've been on campus at times when the malls have been pretty crowded. And I don't know how many students are enrolled in some of the classes, but if they're up in 500 as they possibly could be, maybe that's a little bit too much.

Then I have to think that another weakness—and it's not the university's fault—another weakness is the caliber of students coming in that have to take remedial math and English courses. Now, that's the fault of the high school system, wherever it is, and ASU cannot be blamed for that. But they really shouldn't be teaching remedial courses to high school graduates, but they are.

INT: How did the station KAET change as an organization during your tenure?

BE: Well, I was there a long time, I was there 27 years. We had—I'm trying to think—five or six people in 1961. There was Chuck Allen, who was a student when we were first trying to get the station on the air, but became a staff member. A fellow named Shel Siegel; Shel went on to become the general manager of a station in Pennsylvania. Len Dryer was our chief engineer, and our associate engineer was Joe Manning, and we had one secretary, Cissy Burke. So we had five or six people. And I taught twelve hours of classes. I think the station now has 70 people.

The only way we were able to operate in those early days was with student help. We had students like Al Michaels, on Sunday night football now, but Al was a student then. We had several students whose names aren't important that went on to become fairly wealthy owners of radio and television stations. I still think they have 30 or 40 students that intern there now.

So the numbers of people have necessitated a swelling of administrative staff to take care of the total hours of operation. When you're operating 24 hours a day, with several stations, seven days a week, throughout the year, it takes a lot of people to man the administrative operation and the technical operation, to keep the station going. So I think that has really helped the station, having enough people to accommodate the programming.

I think the programming has improved immensely. When you think of all the things that PBS pioneered—Sesame Street, Wall Street Week, as I said before Nova, Masterpiece Theater—the programming there is wonderful. Now, people say, "Oh, you don't need it anymore—you have Arts & Entertainment, you have Bravo." I challenge people to look at the program schedules and tell me that Arts & Entertainment is really an arts and entertainment channel; it's not. The only arts and entertainment channel you have, even today, is Channel 8, that's the only one you've got. And to think that some Congressmen say we can do away with public broadcasting doesn't make sense to me; of course, I'm prejudiced. (laughter)

INT: If you look ahead to year 2071, that's the university's 100th anniversary, where do you predict Arizona State University will be at that point?

BE: 2071? Well, I can predict where I will be. (laughter) I'm 80 years old now.

I don't know where it's going to be. I have no idea what's going to happen with the world. We may not be here, none of us. I know I won't be, but a lot of people may not be here because of what's happening with the world today. Major disappointments to people my age are the fact that we're in another war again; we thought it was all over with World War II.

Another major disappointment to people my age is the environment; we can't keep going the way we're going now. So I would hope that we would be able to find a solution to some of the environmental problems that are facing us today, and that we would do that as rapidly as possible; we can't wait. I don't know what people think about Al Gore, but I've watched his presentation, and I think there's a lot of meat there and a lot of things for our politicians to ponder.

INT: Let's take the same date, 2071, or say 2061, and ask where you think KAET will be at that point?

BE: I don't think they'll be on the air. I think that they're going to have to adjust, along with all the other stations, into a new technology. I think it'll be a personal technology, where

people will be able to program what they want to program from a choice. They're doing part of that now, in recording. The internet is going to change all of our lives, and I know that my wife, for instance, doesn't want to operate the computer, but I think all of these electronic devices are gonna be linked.

And KAET's gonna be something entirely different; what it will be, I can't tell you, but it's gonna change. And all you have to do is look at the program schedule in 1961 and update that to 2008, and you'll see how the program schedule has changed. And now we're in high definition, and next year, 2009, it's gonna change once again, because you're not gonna have anything but high definition available.

I also think that technology is moving ahead in such a way that we'll have three-dimensional television, or something similar to that, available. Yeah, you're going to experience great change in your life.

Let me expand on why I think great change is going to come about. Change happens all the time. My mother lived until she was 97 years old, and when she passed away, I thought about all the changes in life that she had gone through. There were no automobiles; horse and buggies. No electricity. No telephones. Of course, no radio or television. All those things came about in her 97 years of life. It seems like a long time; it's really not a long time in the span of womankind/mankind. And we are accelerating our growth in all of these areas. It's not just an additive factor, it's a multiple factor. And technology breeds on each other. There is no way that I could predict, like Orwell did in "1984," what's going to happen, but it will be startling.

INT: Good. I'm going to take this time to pause and turn over the tape.

(end of recording)

Side B

INT: June 24, 2008, this is the Tempe Historical Museum's interview with Bob Ellis, former station manager for KAET Channel 8.

From your time at the station, can you relate kind of a funny story from your tenure? Anything from a public address faux pas or a funny meeting or an interesting encounter, maybe some bloopers from on-air?

BE: Well, I can tell you a blooper off-air. Dr. Bill, as I said, pioneered getting the station on the air, he worked for several years, and we went on the air in January 1961, and in June, he got the staff together, the four or five or six of us, and said he was leaving. That surprised all of us, because he had worked so hard to get the station on the air, and he was director of broadcasting and general manager of the station, and he decided to leave. He went to the University of Colorado. So the job remained opened for a while. And Dr. Richardson, who was the vice president, type of provost, at that time, called me in the office and said that he wanted to appoint me director of broadcasting, but I had to get the approval of Dr. Durham, so he said Dr. Durham wanted to interview me. So I went in

and talked with Dr. Durham, who I didn't know very well. And he started speaking to me in French, and then there was this pause, and he said, "You do speak French, don't you?" And I said, "_____*(in French)*_____." And he said, "With the guard, we march along?" I said, "Yes, it's from the boys' chorus in the opera Carmen, and it's the only French I know." He said, "You got the job." (laughter) And we became very good friends after that.

That's about it. Well, I was gonna mention a little bit about Chuck Allen. Chuck Allen, as I said, was a student and worked as our program director, and then left with Shel Siegel to go to Allentown, Pennsylvania to put that station on the air. And then Chuck went from Allentown to KCET in Los Angeles. The big stations in educational broadcasting at that time were WNET in New York, WGBH in Boston, KCET in Los Angeles, and then the San Francisco and the Washington stations. So Chuck went to KCET and developed, among other programs, a Hollywood television theater that won several Emmy awards. He was the executive producer of the Jacques Cousteau series. He was the creator of Cosmos. Chuck came back to Channel 8 because his father was very ill with cancer, and he gave up that job to come back to Phoenix, and we had an opening for a program director, and Chuck came back to the station. He's one of the most creative television people that I've ever worked with. A secretary said to him one time—he was single, by the way—"Chuck, how is it that you know so much about television?" And he said, "I don't have any other distractions." And that gives you some idea of what kind of guy he was. He retired several years ago, and we get together periodically for lunch or dinner and have a good time talking with each other.

There probably are many other stories that I can't think of right now.

INT: That's okay. While you were working for the station, did you see the role or the mission or the purpose of the station change over time? We know that the programming changed and that the color changed and all of that, but specifically within the station itself?

BE: Oh, yeah. The programming changed, as I said, because we veered away from telecourses.

And the big change that came about was a study that the Carnegie Commission funded, a study of educational television and radio, and they came up with a report that went to President *(Lyndon)* Johnson. And as a result of that report, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting was formed. That was a part of Johnson's "Great Society." The Corporation, the CPB, could accept funds from the federal government. Now, where the funds came from has long been a disputed point, because as I recall, the Commission recommended that there be a tax on every television and radio that was purchased in this country, and that tax would go to support public broadcasting. Congress never agreed to that, and so it's been a bill every year since Johnson's administration to fund the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. And it's very difficult to avoid politicization on that whole area.

But anyway, about change. When PBS came along, which was a CPB recommendation, when the Public Broadcasting Service was formed as an outgrowth of CPB, the non-commercial network developed, and we finally got interconnected, land-lined at first and then satellite later on, so we became a network. And we had a central area, a focal point, at PBS. That brought about the dramatic programming changes that you see now on the station.

INT: Getting back to a little more local connection between the station and ASU in general, were you witness to, or was the station witness to, the relationship between Arizona State University and the city of Tempe during its growth period, during its rapid growth period?

BE: Yes, the simple answer is yes. What the administration at the university has always tried to do, since we first started, is have the station be a community resource. Now, in order to have it be a community resource, you have to do things for the community, and I've always thought that Channel 8 did a good job of representing the university to the community. They're doing it now, with Horizon and Horizonte and the Research Magazine TV program that's on the air. And it's been a two-way feedback—programming into the community, and the community back into the station. And I always felt that people in the community supported the station, they had a stake in the station; if you don't support something, you really don't have a stake in it. And at one time, I think we had maybe 70,000 people that contributed to the station. I don't know what they've got now. So it's been a community involvement for the university.

And it was risky for the university at that time to fund the station. I understand that that funding has changed, that they don't get direct funding anymore from the university, but they get indirect funding—studios, and refrigeration, electrical, parking, utilities.

INT: And during this period of growth and during the strengthening of the relationship between the City of Tempe and ASU and also the station, . . .

BE: You have to remember that the station is licensed not to Tempe, but to Phoenix, so for years, the FCC required us, when we had license renewal, to show how we were serving our community of license, which was Phoenix. So in serving the city of Tempe, we also were serving Phoenix and the community.

INT: And who were some of the leading figures during this time? They can be ASU presidents, or at the station, or within the cities.

BE: Within the city of Tempe? Well, let's see. We had Harry Mitchell, he was the Mayor during that period of time, and a great supporter of the station. Still is, and you need people like that back in Congress. We had a lot of community people that served us in various capacities. We had a community advisory board that they still have. We had some of the leading people in the community. Former ambassador to Ghana, Bill Mahoney, was on our board. We had several bankers. So the station has been involved in recruiting people to help us, and they've responded.

INT: Great. And lastly, I've asked you already about interesting anecdotes or stories within the station, but in general, based on your experience living and working in Tempe, do you have any interesting stories related to the university and the city?

BE: Well, my daughter's on the City Council, Shana Ellis; I guess that would be something I can relate to.

I didn't work directly with the City Council. I worked through the university, and through the university's administration. And I worked with a lot of university administrators. I worked with the presidents, of course, and then sometimes my initial route of management or administration was through a dean, so I worked with the deans and the administration.

And I taught, and I thought this was important. Whether I was a good teacher or not, the fact that I was there and involved with the students was important to me. I taught Broadcast Management for twenty years. And I think the relationship with the Walter Cronkite School, even before it was the Cronkite School, was very important to me and to the students and to the university. I think the students respected what we did. They respected us because they worked with us, and they also respected us, I hope, through our teaching ability. Sometimes that's lost in the area, and I don't know if that's something that should continue or not. I shouldn't be critical of that, but I thought it was important.

I can't think of . . . . I'm sure there are plenty of anecdotal material that I will think about after we leave, but not now, it's not coming up clear now.

INT: That's just fine. I don't have any more questions for you, but if there are any last remarks or things that you'd like to say before we go off the record . . .

BE: I think the community—and by the community, I mean the community that we broadcast to—has adopted our non-commercial educational television that now is public broadcasting. And the station broadcasts not only to the metropolitan Phoenix area, but we've had translators all over the state. People in Flagstaff, Prescott, Payson, Greer can view Channel 8 through a translator system. In the early days, this was very important, because television signals weren't available on cable or satellite; now, it's not quite as necessary as it once was.

I've always been an advocate of off-air television. Cable is fine, satellite is fine. But there's always gonna be a small amount of people in the community that can't afford satellite or cable television, and the station still has to remain as an off-air, free television station. You know, when you go into satellite or cable, you're paying for that, and then we're also asking you to support the station, even though you're paying for cable or satellite. It's important to stay in a situation where you can be an off-the-air participant.

I don't have anything else to say. I went back and took a look at the 1956 television schedule in Phoenix. There were three stations on the air: KPHO-TV Channel 5,

KOOL/KOY-TV, Channel 10, and KTYL-TV Channel 12. KOOL/KOY was a joint operation, partly owned by KOY, partly owned by KOOL, then finally KOOL bought out KOY. When you look at the programs that were on—Red Buttons, Captain Video, Armchair Adventures, Cisco Kid, Gene Autry, wrestling was a big thing—then all the way down here somewhere, you see something that says "11:15, the Army-McCarthy Hearings." Now, most people won't know that Senator McCarthy was a very controversial person that found Communism everywhere. And during the period of time when he was criticizing the Army, there was a debate that took place between the representatives of the Army and McCarthy, and they broadcast those—late at night, but they were there.

Today, I'm not so sure that the news programs that we have on the air are answering what we need for people in this country to know what's going on. Well, you say, you know what's happening with the elections and you know what's happening with Iraq. Do we really? When you see a program like Frontline on Channel 8, it's broadcasting about the war in Iraq and Afghanistan from a different perspective. When you hear the debates that are taking place in the Senate on Bill Moyers Journal, or you see Horizonte and Horizon dealing with local problems, you realize that maybe, maybe today public broadcasting, public television, is the only one that's really covering, in-depth, the issues that are very, very important to us. It know it's important to find out what shooting took place yesterday, what road rage took place on the highway, what is happening in local politics to some degree, but it's also very, very important for people to have reports on what are the big issues today, in my mind the big issues. And fortunately, public broadcasting is still doing that, both radio and television.

INT: Good. Anything else?

BE: No.

INT: Okay, this concludes the Tempe Historical Museum's interview of Bob Ellis, June 24, 2008.

(end of recording)

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