

ORAL HISTORY OF ROGER E. ZUCKERMAN
First Interview
November 12, 2013

This is the first interview of the oral history of Roger Zuckerman as part of the Oral History Project of the Historical Society of the District of Columbia Circuit. The interviewer is Gene Granof. The interview took place at Mr. Zuckerman's office at his law firm, Zuckerman Spaeder in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, November 12, 2013.

Granof: Well, we can begin the interview. Let me start with something that is probably the most important thing in your life and that is your family. So, tell me about your wife, your children, your grandchildren.

Zuckerman: My wife is Irene d'Ancona Zuckerman. We have been married for almost fifty years and have been blessed with two children – Laura, who is in her early 40s and Nina, who is three years younger. They are both very accomplished women. Both are lawyers. Laura graduated with honors from Georgetown Law School, and Nina graduated with honors from New York University School of Law. Laura had a successful early career in the law, ending up as a general counsel of a company that was involved forensic investigations and was ultimately purchased by another company. Laura took her equity interest, which was substantial, and essentially retired from the practice of law and entered a career in real estate as a home stager. She is now, I may say proudly, perhaps the preeminent home stager in Montgomery County and has built a very substantial business and works very hard at it. Nina, on leaving law school, joined the Public Defender service where she became an advocate for the rights of young offenders having a variety of legal issues with the school system. She advocates for their participation in various educational programs from which they may have been wrongly barred because of their status as offenders. She is engaged in this worthy effort for a long time now, well over a decade, and is recognized as preeminent in this area.

Both of my daughters married lovely men. Laura married Glen Donath, a terrific lawyer and partner at Katten Muchin. He does exactly what I do and

we have worked together on cases. Nina's husband is Adam Isaacson, who is a real estate agent, and a close friend.

These four young people have given Irene and me five grandchildren, Annie Isaacson, who is ten at this writing; Owen Isaacson who is eight; Nate Isaacson who is four; Alec Donath who is eight and Evan Donath who is seven. So Irene and I have been blessed with five wonderful grandchildren, two wonderful daughters, two wonderful sons-in-law, and a very vibrant family. Irene and I live relatively close to them all in Potomac, Maryland.

Granof: So, you are very lucky that way.

Zuckerman: We are. We count our blessings every day. My father, Abraham Zuckerman, died about two years ago at 102 and 1/2 and lived out in Olney. And Irene's mother died about six or seven months ago at 97 and lived up here on California Street. So, we had a family of some age variance in the extreme, I suppose you could say. Almost 100 years, I guess.

Granof: So, it was your father lived till he was –

Zuckerman: 102 and 1/2. And it is really he, well, it's he and my mother who are the genesis of the Zuckerman presence in Washington, D.C. My dad, it's a good way to work into it?

Granof: Yes, I was going to ask you because I know we had talked in the introductory session and you were telling me about your dad and how he got to D.C.

Zuckerman: Let me go back further and set the scene this way. My father was a civil engineer and came to the District in about 1944 or 1945, right after World War II and worked at the Navy Yard, what was then the Navy Yard. He had put himself through school; first, in New York at Cooper Union, which was a tuition-free school that you could attend in the city, and then he took another degree from NYU. He worked for the Chanin Construction Company in New York doing civil engineering. He took a vacation to Florida, saw this beautiful

woman who was actually an inch or two taller than he standing by a car, spoke with her and the two of them ultimately got engaged, got married and she was Frances to his Abe and they were my parents.

Granof: What year?

Zuckerman: It was the late thirties. The late thirties and both of them were well into their thirties when they got married. One of the oddities is – I actually think this is true – and I don't think my father would mind me saying it. One of the oddities and it may have been more characteristic of that time than this, after they spent some time together on that Florida sojourn where they met each other, they corresponded with one another by letter. My dad in the late 30s had gone to Puerto Rico to work. He built a post office in Puerto Rico and my mother was in Washington, D.C. working. So, the normal sort of dating protocol that you engaged in was really done over the mails. They saw each other in Miami, they felt they would make a fine pair, they corresponded, he asked her to marry him in the mail, they got together and they got married. They were happily married for 40 or 50 years.

Granof: That's an extraordinary story.

Zuckerman: Very bizarre in this day and age. He was a civil engineer, he came to the City, his claim to fame before he came to the City was that he was the supervising engineer on the post office that still stands in San Juan. So, we've been to San Juan a few times and looked at the post office that he helped to build. And when he came to D.C. after serving in the Navy in World War II, one of his early jobs was to be a supervising engineer on two large hangars that you see when you approach National Airport. For a time, they were the U.S. Air Terminal probably ten or fifteen years ago. But they're still standing. They were probably built in 1944 or 1945. I am always reminded of Dad when I drive to the airport and see those two large hangars. But he came to town with my mother. I was born and lived as young fellow – a baby really – with my

folks when my dad was stationed at the Sampson Naval Base in Sampson, New York, which was essentially a place for engineers.

Granof: I'm trying to remember where that is. Is that upstate?

Zuckerman: It's in the Finger Lakes area – right next to Lake Seneca.

Granof: Around Rome?

Zuckerman: Yes. It is northwest of Ithaca, and southeast of Rochester and southwest of Syracuse. But it was a large World War II facility – Dad was stationed there. I was probably one or two at the time and have essentially very little memory of it. My early memories of D.C. are memories of my early years in Southeast Washington. Southeast Washington in the mid-40s was, I suppose, like Prince George's County or Silver Spring in the 1990s. It was a place where you had a lot of young married couples who left the service and were looking for inexpensive housing and we lived – I'll never forget this – we lived at 2902 Erie Street. And Dad worked for the Navy Department and Mom was a homemaker, and I have in the last year visited the apartment. I did not go inside but I visited the apartment. It's still there. Naylor Gardens, to my eye, is still a very nice place. It has had some issues, but it is still basically very, very, very nice.

Granof: So, you're a Washingtonian? Your dad was a New Yorker, at least originally?

Zuckerman: Yes. Dad was a New Yorker. I was actually born November 3, 1942, at Doctors Hospital. Which if you've been in town for a while, you may remember was at 18th & K until the 60s or early 70s.

Granof: I do remember.

Zuckerman: And I have always regarded it as an odd mark of how far I've not come in life over the last forty years in a venue that is about four blocks literally from where I first opened my eyes and took my first breath which, I think, is rather

odd. But I consider myself somebody who grew up in Southeast; loved the City, went to Stanton Elementary School, and had, I think, a very unremarkable childhood as the son of a Depression Era couple that were struggling to make it into the middle class, and had relocated essentially from New York to D.C.

Granof: I am curious about – did you have any relationship with grandparents? Because when I grew up in New York, I was surrounded by the immigrant generation essentially.

Zuckerman: Yes, my father's father, Barnett, died at 66. His son Abraham, my dad, lived to be 102. So, it's sort of hard to figure genetics there. But I had no relationship with either my dad's father or my dad's mother, Anna, both of whom died relatively young. My mother's father, Adolf, was a tailor and had come from Albany after Mom and her sister, Sydney Gold – more about Sydney later – had relocated as young women to D.C. Mom worked in the Commerce Department. Sydney worked – I couldn't begin to tell you. And my grandparents lived at 5801 5th Street – 5th and Nicholson – in one of the row houses up in that Coolidge High School neighborhood from the 50s onward. I had a pretty nice relationship with my grandmother Anna in particular. My grandfather died relatively young. It was a relationship that I remember, probably not intense, but it was a relationship that I remember.

Granof: Were your grandparents immigrants?

Zuckerman: All four of my grandparents were immigrants. All four came from the Pale of Settlement, I think, between Poland and Russia that housed millions of Jews at the turn of the century. My mother's father left in his early 20s. He was a tailor in the Russian Army and purportedly had the best fitting uniform in the entire army. That was the family lore. They wanted to re-conscript him for yet another term and he said, "I'm not having any of that," and came to this country, I think, easily or at least without great difficulty as you could do at

that time, and went through Castle Garden (not Ellis Island) and ended up in Albany where he was tailor and had a tailor shop. Later, he was a tailor down here. I have primal memories of him getting into a dispute with the man for whom he worked and going into Small Claims Court to sue him. I was six or eight years old in the late 40s and my mother and I went to Smalls Claims Court with him. I know the building down at the courthouse complex where all of this occurred in about 1948 or 1949 and I have these primal sensations every time I see the building.

Granof: So you were six or seven years old at that time.

Zuckerman: I was very young but I remember accompanying my mother and my grandfather in court at that point. We moved to Silver Spring in 1951. A bit about my father's career which is a little informative because it tells you something about me. Dad took a job with a then-fledgling Washington construction company operated by a man whom I knew only as Charlie Smith, and Dad was essentially as an engineer who would go on site and actually supervise the construction of buildings. Dad was Charlie's right-hand man in the late 40s. I would go to the office sometimes with Dad on the weekends and I have these, again, primal memories of actually visiting this office that was the business home to Charlie Smith, also known as Charles E. Smith, who became essentially the largest builder in the Washington area during the 70s and 80s.

Granof: I always remembered him as a major real estate developer.

Zuckerman: Yes, he was a huge developer. Developed Rosslyn. Dad left in 1951. I have again very vivid memories of this. I think he had done well with Mr. Smith, but Dad wanted to go out on his own and he wanted to be his own boss. By the early 50s he was over forty. And at about that time, Robert Smith (Bob) (who was Charlie's son and for whom the Robert Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland is now named because it was endowed by the

Smith family); Robert Smith came out of the University of Maryland and went to work for Charlie, when Robert was probably twenty-one. And Dad said, “You know, it’s enough. I’m going to go out on my own. I’m not going to hang around. I’m always going to be second fiddle to the kid. I want to be on my own.” And Dad turned out to be a developer in his own right and probably forswore a substantial opportunity by leaving Charlie when he did and going out on his own. At least in retrospect that was the family’s perception. But it was important to him to be on his own and to be his own boss.

Granof: It also I suppose was not entirely foreseeable.

Zuckerman: No, it was not foreseeable at all, but it did not stop my wife from – I’m exaggerating here – shedding a tear now and then if Dad had hung around and been the number 2 or 3 or 5 person in the Smith conglomerate.

Granof: Yes, I guess he went on to be one of the extraordinarily wealthy.

Zuckerman: The Smith business became extremely successful. Dad was a developer. He developed some apartments in D.C. But of competent, middling success, but nothing more.

Granof: Did your mother work at all?

Zuckerman: No, Mom was a stay-at-home mom. We left Southeast in 1951 and went to Silver Spring. Dad had built a house at Colesville Road and Bruce Drive, right where the Beltway now intersects Colesville Road. It’s there that Dad lived from 1951 until the mid-90s. Really until he was quite old. And it’s there that I went to Parkside Elementary School and Montgomery Hills Junior High School – both of which are closed now – then went on to Montgomery Blair from which I graduated in 1960 with a fine group of friends who were very influential on my young life, I think.

Granof: I’ll get to that in a moment. First, I want to ask you if you have any brothers or

sisters.

Zuckerman: I have a sister, Jane, who is nine years younger than I, who followed in my footsteps and became a lawyer and is working as an administrator for a firm called Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis, LLP, in Philadelphia. She is married to John Makransky, a wonderful guy, who was for a long time an insurance agent and has now branched out. They have a wonderful son, Matt, my nephew, who is probably 23 or 24.

Granof: There is a big age gap between you and your sister – nine years.

Zuckerman: Yes, nine years. We were close for a while and then as happens when there is a nine-year difference, particularly when I went away to school and came back and got married, I suppose, we were not as close. I'd like to think, at least, that we're very close now. It's a very special relationship.

Granof: Tell me about your influential friends in high school. The ones that influenced you anyway.

Zuckerman: This is so far not the stuff of a really interesting movie. I think my life was a very ordinary life. I loved sports. I played sports. I was pretty good but not great and I went to a 2,000-student high school. I did not play on any varsity teams. I think I was a very bright person, but not a rigorous student, and I hung around with four or five boys who were very bright and much more committed than I. They went off to very fine schools. They went to Yale, Oberlin, Haverford and Cornell and places like that. Irene, I think, would want me to say this because she regards it as rather odd in my life and my upbringing. I received no parental guidance when it came to applying to college. To the extent that I relied on anybody, I relied on the college counselors at Blair.

Granof: And what year was this?

Zuckerman: 1959 through 1960.

Granof: But that was much more typical. Today, parents get so involved.

Zuckerman: Well, my wife had some parental guidance. She graduated from high school in 1963. I had none. I fancied myself Ivy League material and I think I applied to Amherst and a bunch of schools like that and was rejected everywhere. I do remember I was wait-listed at Rutgers. I had absolutely no idea what I was going to do but I heard of this thing called the College Clearinghouse, where if you had pretty good board scores and good grades, and I applied and got a thousand acceptances from a bunch of somewhat lesser schools. I asked around and I had a friend who said you can apply late, there are a couple of really good state universities – the University of North Carolina and there is Wisconsin – and they're very good state schools and you might want to apply there. I applied to both. I got into both. My buddy was going to Wisconsin and so I basically flipped a coin and said I will go to Wisconsin. My folks put me on the train at the old B&O station in Silver Spring in the fall of 1960. I did not have a room at Wisconsin. I had to find a room. I had a duffle bag and a trunk and took the train with my buddy to Wisconsin. Again, my wife finds it astounding that I was not driven to the school with parents supervising, unpacking, and the like. Certainly from my parents' experience, my dad in particular, he handled his life on his own in his college years and I have the memory of pretty much doing the same thing. I always felt that I was as bright as my friends; but I had not studied as they had, and two of them ended up doing either law school or graduate work at Yale, two of them ended up at Harvard, one as a Harvard physics student and one in the law school. And I vowed when I went to Wisconsin, I would not be second to any of them. So I ended up at Harvard Law School with the two of my buddies who as well had gotten there. And I always felt that the experience of having underperformed in high school, having friends who had performed well and earned the fruits of their success, made me a more competitive person and made me a more driven person when I went to Wisconsin. And I was a much better student there and

performed at a much higher level there.

Granof: So, in high school, what did you like to do? You said you like sports.

Zuckerman: My junior high school and high school years, again, with all apologies to Hollywood and script writers, I think in retrospect were really unremarkable. I was extremely shy with girls. I didn't date. I hung around with the guys. I played intramural sports and sandlot sports and had a complete succession of odd jobs, had no particular hobbies to speak of and was marginally responsible, but not in any respect driven, distinguished or focused. And I was not pushed by my parents in that sense. I lived a very basic, average middle-class existence that was devoid of failure. It was devoid of significant achievement. I was on the surface pleasantly social. To the extent I had any inclination, I was very interested in student government and ran for a variety of offices and positions; some of which I won and some of which I didn't win. As I look back, I don't see that part of my life up until the time I was seventeen as being particularly interesting or distinguished. A very formative influence on me was my aunt. My aunt (Sydney Gold) and my uncle (Oscar Gold) were my mother's sister and brother. Oscar was a working man and worked on the loading dock at the old Hecht's warehouse for many long years. I think of him as I drive out New York Avenue to this day. The building is still there although it's going to be refurbished as condos. Sydney was an unusual woman and, in the story of my life she deserves much mention. She was the last of three siblings to die. She probably died six or eight years ago. She was a very good student and did not attend college, but went directly to – I don't know whether it was called the Washington College of Law back then – she went to American University Law School as you could do in the old days without having to go to college. Judge Sirica did it. John Sirica and Tom Flannery, Judge Flannery, two local judges of some note, went only to law school. She was one of the few women in her class. She graduated. I don't know whether she passed the bar or not. But she was a very sophisticated thinker and a sophisticated person who went on to have a long career - first

working for the Democratic Party. She worked for Paul Butler, who was the chairman of the Democratic Party, in the 50s, and then went on to work in a succession of government jobs. She had a lifelong interest in politics and she was an influence on me because, as I think back to my teenage days hanging out as it were, I was not so much taken with my dad's engineering focus, I was very much taken with Sydney's view of politics and I think probably more so than I recognized. At the time my aunt's political interests, leanings, and discussions, directed me toward becoming a political science major at Wisconsin and ultimately to becoming a lawyer. The one thing that I remember – and I must tell you I am proud of and I am inserting, by fiat, in this oral history – is that there was an evening again in my kind of bored teenage state when I had nothing to do and began reading. I would read the World Book back in the old days and just flip through the World Book. I was also reading one of my dad's engineering texts that had "pi" written to probably the first-thousand or five-thousand places. And I said I wonder how much of that I can memorize. Now, the Guinness Book of World Records has people who have done it into the thousands. I did manage to memorize, just sitting there, using what I think was a very fertile mind that was unsullied at that point by the erosion that comes with alcohol and age, I managed to memorize the first hundred places, seemingly to me, without much difficulty. And to this day, as a parlor trick I can do "pi" to the twentieth place. To that extent, my father's engineering background was an influence on me, but not much.

Granof: I can do it to five places only because that was our high school cheer. 3.14159.

Zuckerman: 3.14159265358979323846. It's like a phone number or anything like that.

Granof: That's right. A sport's score.

Zuckerman: A sport's score. But I don't really look back on my youth as a time either of extraordinary success or extraordinary deprivation. I think it was remarkable

in the degree to which I had a difficult time dating. I went to the dances and events that were required, but for some reason it was not a set of relationships that came easily to me. Very bizarre. Notwithstanding the fact that I was a friendly person and moderately, I think, popular.

Granof: And certainly from your personality as far as I can tell now you're outgoing. No one would call you an introvert.

Zuckerman: I am not sure but that I wasn't more introverted than extroverted. And there came a point in my life, or there was a process in my life, where I kind of visualized what I wanted to be and how I wanted to be and tried to remake myself in those images. And I think thematically that as a mentor and a wise and old observer of life, my message to younger people is you can be not simply whatever you want to be, but you can be in a very fundamental personal sense, you can be whoever you want to be. You can really reinvent yourself in whatever form, whatever fashion you desire and you are not restricted by your chemical make-up, your genes, your personality type or other things that you might ordinarily think require that you go down Path A as opposed to Path B.

Granof: When did you come to this realization? How old were you?

Zuckerman: Well, I was more extroverted but still not perfect in college. I was very active in student politics. I was chairman of the Campus Political Party. I was the treasurer of the Student Government. I did a lot of that stuff. I was still not perfectly formed so there were periods in my life when if you had encountered me in a social setting, you would have said he's an outgoing extroverted guy. If you had looked at my insides during that period, you might have concluded he's under a lot of stress right now and this is all an act! And that tension – this was a big part of my existence – manifested itself in a couple of respects. The first is when I went off to Harvard in the fall of 1960, not knowing what I wanted –

Granof: So you were in college from 1956 –

Zuckerman: No, no the fall of 1964.

Granof: So you were in college from 1960 to 1964?

Zuckerman: If you had observed me, you would have said, gee, he's an outgoing person, he did very well at Wisconsin, he seemed to be a student leader, he seemed to have a pretty aggressive way about him, but if you would have looked inside, you probably would have concluded that that was not quite so natural as it might be to others and it was the beginning of a personality type that I wanted to be but it probably was not completely authentic. And it manifested itself in the fact that in the fall of 1960 when I went off to Harvard.

Granof: 1960?

Zuckerman: 1964, I'm sorry. I developed ulcerative colitis which was an ulceration of the bowel and the colon. It can be very serious.

Granof: Was this as a first year student?

Zuckerman: As a first year student. I had actually got it – I spent the summer of 1960 in San Francisco, came back, had all the symptoms –

Granof: You mean 1964, the summer of 1964?

Zuckerman: 1964. Had all the symptoms. That was diagnosed, started medication, went off to Harvard, worked like a dog, spent a week that year in Beth Israel Hospital, did very well my first year, but had this affliction that was in some sense produced, I think, by stress or tension or something going on inside me. Part of it is genetic, I think.

Granof: Part of it is the first year of Harvard Law School.

Zuckerman: Yes. But I had it for nine or ten years. It went away on its own. My wife is

very responsible for suggesting to me that there was – not a psychosomatic element – but it was very dependent on your mood and attitude. If you controlled your mood and attitude, you simply wouldn't have the symptoms. The common symptoms were diarrhea and bleeding. When I got out of law school and went to work for the U.S. Attorney's Office, I would take the bus from Van Ness North (the Van Ness Apartments) down Connecticut Avenue and then down to the Courthouse (the U.S. Courthouse), and I worked in the U.S. Attorney's Office – I'll get to that – and I knew every public restroom between Van Ness North and the Courthouse, which is a common aspect of the disease. I knew every office restroom, I knew every gas station restroom, because you simply had to go to the bathroom. And here I was presenting myself to the U.S. Attorney David Bress in 1967 as a trial lawyer, who is going to get into the courtroom and mix it up for hours on end, and I couldn't make it to the office without running for a bathroom. And the oddity is that in all the time I tried a bunch of cases (long trials, argued cases in the Circuit Court of Appeals) – all that I had to deal with – it never bothered me once when I got on my feet. But I say that to you because I think that feature of my youth was kind of a physical manifestation of the stress that is created as I attempted to kind of remake what was a quiet personality into something that was a little bit more assertive and aggressive and the like. That is manifestation number one. Manifestation number two is: (if Irene were here and she were on this, she would describe instances as follows) I found myself in social settings where I was completely one-hundred percent flummoxed, where this ostensibly convivial, jovial, confident personality that I had strived very hard to concoct simply could not be mastered, couldn't be used and I reverted to an older style which was much more introverted and much more ill-at-ease.

Granof: But in college. First of all, were you intellectually turned on in college?

Zuckerman: Yes. It was a great. Wisconsin was a great experience for me. Where did you

do your undergraduate?

Granof: Hamilton College.

Zuckerman: Yes. It was great for me, because it was the equivalent of hitting in maybe Double or Triple A baseball. I wasn't ready for Amherst. I wasn't ready for that kind of school. But I was smart and I was very driven. I worked seven days a week; I worked late at night and I loved my classes at Wisconsin. I could excel; I was rewarded; I could see if I worked hard for four years, it would be a life-changing event; and intellectually, it was incredibly stimulating. And the feature of my life I think that I am most proud of, Gene, is that from September of my first year in college through the end of my first year at Harvard, I really did nothing to speak of but work. I worked like a dog for five straight years. That means working Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday night studying – saying to myself, “I'm bright enough, but if I work harder than the next guy I will achieve something. Relatively speaking, I was very successful for those five years. And it was transformative. In the main, I remember my college years and my first year at Harvard. Not my second and third. I quit and played cards my second and third year. I thought I could skate by because I figured out the system. But for five years I worked like a dog, and I think it was transformative in that it made me a much more sophisticated thinker and a much better thinker, speaker, and was the most transformative period in my life. Those five years.

Granof: But to be in student government at the level you were at, certainly in a big school run for the head of student government, means you were devoting a reasonable amount of time to that.

Zuckerman: Yes, I was.

Granof: When did you decide to do that? Your first year, second year?

Zuckerman: I always had the bug in high school. I always had this vision – it's bizarre. I

had this vision that I wanted to be perceived as a leader. I didn't have the gravitas, the sophistication, the athletic ability to get as far as I wanted to get, but to the extent there was anything that was animating me, it was this desire to be an officer, a president of this, that. And I think probably at the end of the day this motivation to lead was an animating feature in my law practice. That's the way I would put it. It did not take away from what I envisioned as – and what I still envision – as this bizarre sense that I have that my life is really a function of adhering to the Protestant work ethic. That I am not entitled to whatever the benefits are of my life unless I have sacrificed and gone through pain. You could psychoanalyze me I think in that sense. But I have no right to feel as if I am entitled to anything unless I have gone through a lot of deprivation.

Granof: It doesn't come easy to you. It's not as if you were an absolute natural and did it effortlessly.

Zuckerman: One-hundred percent right. It is a sense that if I'm not working and if I'm not suffering, I have no right to expect that come Monday morning or Tuesday morning that good things are going to happen to me. I still suffer when I try cases. They're not the most pleasant period of time for me. I have been in trials that have lasted as long as nine months. There is a lot of tension and a lot of worry and a lot of difficulty. There is an addictive quality – it's bizarre – it's different for everybody. There is an addictive quality for me because it feels so good when the case is over. Some trial lawyers who are naturals will say I'm really bummed. I loved the last month standing up in front of the court and jury and doing my closings and whatever – is really great –

Granof: Like your client F. Lee Bailey?

Zuckerman: Yes. And they love the experience. I revel in meeting the challenge of doing it. But for me when it's over, that's the exhilaration. It's the fact that that was a very high mountain, it was a very hard mountain to climb and is very painful.

Granof: So, you were talking about what it was like to be in trials and how you felt.

Zuckerman: Yes, and again, for those who listen to this and are looking for a theme, the theme is that I visualize myself as self-made or self-created, not quite in the normal sense, but in the sense that I had an idea of what I wanted to do; it didn't quite fit with my personality and I tried to reconfigure my personality and my approach so that it was what I wanted it to be and it worked pretty well. It probably took its toll on me. There are still probably from time to time holes or cracks in the façade. But it was not a completely natural thing for me to be a trial lawyer. It was not a completely natural thing for me to try to imagine how one would have a law firm. It certainly wasn't natural thing for me to represent people like F. Lee Bailey. I always remember – because I think it's indicative of that – my dad in his later years, he was well into his nineties when he would say this to me, “You know, I never thought you would be a trial lawyer.” And what he meant to say was – “You were not really all that effusive a kid – never occurred to me that you would end up as a trial lawyer.”

Granof: Well, you know, from what you tell me, someone looking at it from the outside, I have to say, I'm a little bit skeptical only because when you say even in high school you were interested in running for positions in student government. And then when you get to college, you really as you put it and I'll ask you about it later, just barely missed being head of student government at a major public university. And that does not fit with a retiring personality. This is someone who clearly has the skills and ability to deal with people in an outgoing way.

Zuckerman: Maybe. I mean this is a terrible analogy – but I think there are from time to time people in public life who are in public life to overcome a sense of shyness or difficulty with people.

Granof: Richard Nixon.

Zuckerman: Yes, Nixon. There are from time to time people for whom this is a mountain to be climbed because that's the way they want to be and it's just not natural to them. And I think there are probably other examples of really worthy people who had worthy careers, but Nixon always stood out in my mind as somebody who kind of remade himself and felt that he had to take a path that was not natural to him.

Granof: Maybe. But my sense is that you probably, unlike Nixon who really did not have great interpersonal skills, I mean in turn people who –

Zuckerman: That's fair.

Granof: That's not true of you.

Zuckerman: Well, you're just looking at circa 2013 Roger. Okay?

Granof: Sure.

Zuckerman: If you looked at circa 1960 Roger or 1965 Roger, you wouldn't quite see the same thing. That's the only way I can put it. It probably was there in some respects.

Granof: Well sure, but we all change. I mean you know that's –

Zuckerman: But again, my mantra, in my view, is that you pretty much could be whatever you want to be in terms of how you approach the world and my life to some degree carries that lesson with it. I guess that's what –

Granof: But you're really not suggesting you can be a Zelig.

Zuckerman: No, but I can tell you that I've come across – chameleon might be better, okay. I've come across – I'm not going to name them – but I've come across people in my life whose affect, who presented themselves to the world in a certain way and I am sure that consciously or subconsciously I've tried to copy that. I think that's actually characteristic of people who are trial lawyers. You look at

somebody who is trying a case; you say that's a terrible style. I would never do that, and then you find somebody else who is very good and much as a doctor says, gee, I like the way that guy did that operation, got to move my hands differently and try this approach. You're a trial lawyer, you're basically trying to emulate personality styles and traits and affects and tricks. And I think probably it's a more chameleon-like profession than dentistry or accounting or something like that.

Granof: Maybe. But wouldn't you say that's true, up to a point, that is, you can see someone performing in the courtroom and you could say that's great for him. It really works for him, but will never work for me.

Zuckerman: A hundred percent, hundred percent. There are limitations to how much you can veer hither or yon, to left or right, but still I do think that people whose job is to persuade – could be a salesman too. I mean a lawyer is basically a salesman – trial lawyer. Spent a lot of time analyzing their own effect on people and how to change it and how to make it better and how to be different. The ones I think who are successful are not necessarily the ones who are naturals, but they are the ones who can role play and act and change themselves that way. I was never ever interested in and probably never could have engaged in thespian-type activities. Not an actor. Had no desire to do it. Didn't seem natural or authentic to my personality. I met Irene my second year in law school.

Granof: Where was she?

Zuckerman: She was attending Tufts. She was an occupational therapist in training at Tufts. A beautiful woman and an absolutely obsessive caregiver. And if I may say this, it was, for me, love at first sight. We were fixed up on a blind date. We met in front of the Harvard Coop. It was an absolute certainty by the time the date was over that I was going to marry her. And I think something like that she felt, and our relationship I am convinced was unique. I don't

know if I consciously did this, but there are two aspects of the relationship that I think were unique. One, I never asked her to marry me. It was always a question of when we were going to get married not whether. There was never a signal moment when I proposed. That's a good thing, I think, a neat thing. Two, the not-neat-thing is I never bought her an engagement ring, which I thought was indicative of my practicality. I didn't have any money. I thought it was basically a waste of money on a bauble. In retrospect, I wouldn't do it that way. And her mother ended up giving her a pearl ring or something that she could call an engagement ring. It set me back a long ways with her mother. The third thing, Gene, we laugh about this all the time. Apart from not proposing – apart from not giving her an engagement ring, I didn't have any money, I was eager to get to the U.S. Attorney's Office. We had an apartment in D.C. We got married at her house in Woodmere, Long Island. She said, "Where are we going on the honeymoon?" and I said, "I've got a great place in Ocean City, Maryland." She had no idea what it was. We went to one of these motels on about 50th Street in Ocean City, right near Anthony's. There's an Italian restaurant near there. She stayed for a day or two and said, "This is just horrible. Let's go back to D.C."

Granof: So, you got married after law school?

Zuckerman: Got married after law school, lived in Van Ness North. A lot of other great young couples, and started at a dream job in the U.S. Attorney's Office in the summer of 1967 in a very unique position. Traditionally, Assistant U.S. Attorneys are hired after clerkships or indeed now after they have spent three or four years in the outside world. And David Bress, who was then the U.S. Attorney and was a Harvard graduate, came to Harvard and interviewed law students who were soon to graduate. He hired two members of the "Class of 1967" to start immediately in the U.S. Attorney's Office, of all things, to be an intern or clerk for nine months. Then you got an appointment as an Assistant U.S. Attorney. He hired me and Reid Chambers who became a very successful Native American Indian rights lawyer. We began right out of law

school in the U.S. Attorney's Office, which is, I think, an absolute rarity.

Granof: It certainly is.

Zuckerman: And it was a time in the life of that office of sociological change. It was a period in the late 1960s when the career prosecutors, who were talented and wonderful people, were slowly being supplanted by a much younger Ivy League-educated group that turned out to be incredibly talented and turned out to really be the foundation, in many respects, of the trial bar in the City for the next forty years.

Granof: But the U.S. Attorney's Office has two sides to it. One was the criminal side of prosecutors but there was a whole civil side to it.

Zuckerman: But this is the side that counted. When I was there it was the criminal side, because it really is where you got to try cases in front of jurors. So there may have been 50 lawyers when I started and maybe 60 or 80 when I finished. The idea was to go to get jury trials, to learn what it was like to win cases, to lose cases, and to work with the cops. As formative as the five years were that I described to you earlier, my last two years at Harvard, as I have said and I confess for the record here, I played cards, skipped class and felt that I learned everything I needed to know – certainly by the end of the second year. I am still of the view that law school should be two years not three.

Granof: Certainly at that point Harvard was not giving much – almost no experience – in terms of practical skills to be a trial lawyer.

Zuckerman: No, there wasn't anything I felt I was getting out of the school.

Granof: They never taught you how to take a deposition.

Zuckerman: No, no, it was different. The three or four years that I was in the U.S. Attorney's Office were for me – had the same compelling quality – lifetime compelling quality – that you find when you talked to people who have been in

the Marine Corps. It's just an experience that is so different and so intense and so challenging at times and so worthy at times that you never lose hold of it.

Granof: I think that is a very common theme. I haven't met anyone who served in the U.S. Attorney's Office who hasn't echoed exactly that sentiment.

Zuckerman: And it's appropriate – we can sort finish on this note – it's appropriate I am saying this to you today because on Thursday we are giving the Fifth Annual Flannery Lecture, which is a lecture series that many of us who served under David Bress' successor, Tom Flannery, put together in his memory. This year we are having Mary Jo White as our principal speaker. We've had Justice Scalia and others. But it's akin to the old regiment trying to get together and stay together and memorialize the memories and the person who was our leader at this incredibly formative time, when we were basically young pups just learning what it meant to be a lawyer. It was a very, very special time.

Granof: Were you in a fraternity when you were at Wisconsin?

Zuckerman: I was a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi for two years. I then decided it really wasn't for me. I was actually living with the president at the time in an apartment. There were three of us. Two of us had gone to see a movie about jewel thieves and it gave us the idea that what we would do is break into the storeroom – the food storeroom at the fraternity house – and create a secret panel, sawing out a panel of the door such that we could get in and take food without being caught. There is nothing to steal except 10 gallon cans of tomato soup or whatever. We did that and some of the brothers were upset by the prank.

Granof: You mean it came out?

Zuckerman: It came out. Yes, our jewel thief skills were not really very good. I remained very close to my fraternity, but I decided I really wanted a more heterogeneous, diverse environment and had always really operated outside

that. I had a meal job for three years and was a dishwasher in the Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority house and washed dishes and made a lot of good friends that way. A lot of friends and I had a really nice life there. I thought it unorthodox in terms of the scrapes that I got in. I suppose it always gave me the feeling that it's pretty easy to get – a lot easier than you think – to get yourself in a bad spot. It's a lot easier than you think and you have to be very careful.

Granof: Well it's a good place to conclude the first interview. We've covered a lot here. So thank you.