

Kate Butler Wallis

Personal Reflections

August 11, 1981

Sr. Martin: This is August the 11th, 1981. I have with me Mrs. Kate Butler Wallis, recently retired Chairman of the local College Council, having served on it since 1955. Well, Mrs. Wallis, we have been over the questions. Now we'll start seriously.

Mrs. Wallis: It certainly is a pleasure to be here this morning.

Sr. Martin: Could you recall for me some of your earliest memories as a child of, for example, while I was thinking about it I thought of that beautiful home on North and Delaware Avenue, it's a landmark of the city. You lived there. Do you have special thoughts about it and memories as a little girl; you lived there from the very beginning didn't you?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, I did Sister.

Sr. Martin: Did you think of it as a usual type of house? Or was it unusually large. What memories do you have of that beautiful home?

Mrs. Wallis: No, as a matter of fact, I have many many happy memories of living there. As far as I was concerned, it was a perfectly normal house and there wasn't anything large or strange about it. I grew up like any normal child doing all the usual naughty things that one does. I can remember one of my early recollections was the fact that on my nurses day out I was always delighted because I could go down and have supper in the maid's dining room with the cook and the staff in the house. And that was always a great treat. I also remember one of the times when I was very young when there was always a staff dinner party once a year. I had thought that was just marvelous because I was allowed to stay up and how-do-you-do and sort of see how it was all going and what-not and I must say they all enjoyed having the same kind of a dinner party that my mother and father used to have. So I thought that was great fun too.

Sr. Martin: How many people worked there, do you recall?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes we had a staff of about 12 and we had some live in and some did not, of course. But the house ran, and my mother and father entertained a great deal. I remember, as a very small one, my mother used to have luncheon parties. In the old days one did that. She had made these luncheons of about 24, and we always had those marvelous little green and white bon bons that I thought were the most special things. So, I used to love that, and then I remember also when I had childrens' parties what fun we had. It was a great place to play hide and seek. That was fun. My grandmother from Atlanta would come up and spend a month or six weeks with us. She very often would play with me and play hide and seek and hide the switch

which was, at that time, I guess, a game that she knew about. I had never heard of it. But, anyway, she would play that with me with this great long stick that she would hide, and I would have to find it. We did that inside as well as outside depending on the weather. Then I dressed up in my grandmother's old clothes and my mother's old clothes and paraded around. So, I would say I lived the life of any normal little girl growing up. Then as I became older, I used to have tea with my mother in the afternoon in her sitting room, in the winter time, there was always a great fire. I think probably that is the most memorable part of my growing up because it was something that I always looked forward to, always delicious things like toast with orange marmalade. Things like that today one never really thinks about.

Sr. Martin: Were you close to your mother as you were growing up?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes and no because she traveled a great deal and entertained a great deal, I never felt strange from her at all. I always had a nurse and later on a governess so I was always very well looked after. Also, I always had the privilege and pleasure of coming to great big afternoon teas she had, and usually on Sunday afternoons there would be a reception or something. One of them was for Percy Granger, and I remember being quite impressed with his long flowing white hair at the time and also being told that I must remember to pass the sandwiches and not eat them.

Sr. Martin: And what about your father?

Mrs. Wallis: I remember so well that he was away a great deal when I was very small because he was a newspaper publisher and also president of the American Publishers Association for two terms which was 8 years. That took him away a great deal during the week and, of course, that was before the days of planes. So he would take trains several times a week. I remember every time he went to New York, he would bring back something. I remember a marvelous little dress he brought me that was all lace, embroidered and what-not. I thought that was the most beautiful thing. I still do. I had lots of fun with my father. He and I were very close, and in later years when I was in school in Buffalo, my mother spent a great deal of time over in Europe, so I would be at home with my father. We had some lovely times.

Sr. Martin: I'm going to interject a little story just to have it on record about your father. One of our Sister's mother went to the University of Buffalo. She got her teaching degree there. But in order to work her way through college she worked at your home, particularly when they were giving big parties. She made hor d'oeuvres just to please your father like nobody's business, and he would come back into the kitchen and tell the people how much he appreciated the work they did. Mrs. Pfaff said he was the kindest man and the nicest man, handsome of course. She was just a young girl at the time, and she always looked forward to working at the Butlers when they were having a big party because she was to help take off the coats, put them away, and go back into the kitchen and fix the hor d'oeuvres on the trays and everything. She said that she always had such beautiful memories of your father, and I thought that would be nice to put this on the tape with you.

Mrs. Wallis: I do too. That was typical of the type of man he was. He always told me to put yourself in the other persons shoes and always think of them and how you would feel were you doing the same thing or in the same situation. He always did that without question. He was one of the most thoughtful people in the world.

Sr. Martin: In going through your mother's possessions, papers and everything, I came across this magnificent book, your brother's? How old was he when he died?

Mrs. Wallis: He was not quite 4 years old.

Sr. Martin: Beautiful child, and I am sure that must have been a heart-breaking experience for your parents.

Mrs. Wallis: I don't think my mother ever really did get over it actually. Unfortunately, I never knew my brother, because he was 7 years older than I and having died at the age of 4.

Sr. Martin: You see this is in the eyes of God, you wonder if he had lived possibly the Buffalo Evening News might have continued. You just don't know. I'm sure your father must have thought of that. He must have been heartbroken too. But of course he had to cover up and not show it and express it as much. It's always a tragedy when a child dies, particularly a son, who's going to carry on the name and that sort of thing, but those pictures are just beautiful. Your mother was just a beautiful woman and your father, of course, so handsome. They made such a beautiful couple and with that beautiful baby. I think that's one of the treasures of the collection. There are two copies. Recently one of the students came in to do a paper on Mrs. Butler and she was going through some of these. She just loved it. And it was so sad, this little sad thing. But this is the way it happens in life.

Mrs. Wallis: That's right, absolutely. I gather that he had never been a well baby. I guess it was one of those things. Perhaps he never would have been strong. You know in a way sometimes those things are blessings instead of growing up to be semi-invalid it's better not too.

Sr. Martin: But you knew of this, of course, from your mother, all your life and I understand, is this correct, somebody said that every year she had a calendar, it was a child on the calendar of the Buffalo Evening News.

Mrs. Wallis: Usually there were children. They were not children that my parents knew. They were just attractive children. They liked the paintings and pictures of whatever it was. I know at one time it was rumored that I was one of the calendars, but no, I never got on it.

Sr. Martin: You weren't a calendar girl!

Mrs. Wallis: No, because at that time when I was growing up, unfortunately kidnapping was at its height and so, therefore, I did not perhaps have as much freedom as I would have liked or my parents would have liked. I was not allowed to go out alone without somebody being with me. I was about 12 or 14. I was allowed to go out with a friend at the age of 12 but up to that point a chauffeur went everywhere with me. Either the chauffeur, the nurse or the governess or somebody and I thought what the most wonderful thing in the world would be able to go out alone like everybody else. Of course when I did, I realized it wasn't all that exciting either.

Sr. Martin: We'll go into that next question. Your mother is from Atlanta, the Robinson family, and they are quite well known I understand. Your father was born here in Buffalo and your grandfather was from Leroy. I asked this question before but I will ask it again for the sake of the record, did you know members of both sides of the family and which side were you closest to?

Mrs. Wallis: Actually the only grandparent I had the pleasure of knowing was my mother's mother because unfortunately my grandfather, my father's father, died before I was born and so I didn't have the pleasure of knowing him. His mother, my grandmother on my father's side, died when she was 30 years old. She was a very young woman.

Sr. Martin: Your grandfather never remarried?

Mrs. Wallis: He never remarried and he and his brother, Ambrose Butler, who was also in the newspaper business with my grandfather, I guess were rather eligible bachelors, shall we say, and I think that my mother and my father's sister spent a great deal of time trying to see to it that neither one got entangled with ladies to the point of getting married. It kept them very busy.

Sr. Martin: Did your father have any brothers or sisters?

Mrs. Wallis: My father had a sister, yes, Ada Butler Mitchell and her daughter is Marjorie Van Antwerp. She grew up in the house on the corner of North and Delaware, until the age of 4 and she knew my grandfather very well. I don't see how all of these people lived in that house but they did. My grandfather and my mother's father, and then my aunt (she was married from the house). She and her husband, Roscoe Mitchell, also lived there and my cousin Marjorie was born there. My grandfather decided it was time that the Mitchell family had a house of their own, so he built a house for them which was a small replica of the house on North and Delaware which is located on the corner of Delaware and Highland.

Sr. Martin: Is it still there?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, it belongs to the Episcopal Diocese. Marjorie had a brother after they moved to their house on the corner of Delaware and Highland. Unfortunately her mother and father and her brother all died within the space of 18 months when she was 19. She and I really were virtually only children together, and while she is a little older than I we have always been very close.

Sr. Martin: Where is she now?

Mrs. Wallis: She lives in Sarasota, Florida, and she also has a house in Lorraine, Ontario.

Sr. Martin: Your grandmother was the closest to you.

Mrs. Wallis: Yes.

Sr. Martin: She was a very lovely looking woman. We have a picture of her with you as a child.

Mrs. Wallis: She was a wonderful person. Granny never got cross. I don't know how she had the patience of Job because she never, never got cross or out of patience. She was a marvelous playmate.

Sr. Martin: How many sisters and brothers did your mother have.

Mrs. Wallis: My mother was one of six. She was the youngest and the brother closest to her was seven years older than she. There were four brothers and a sister and then my mother. Her sister was 25 years older than she. There was a great span there in that family. She grew up being rather pampered, and also she had to be a tomboy and play baseball with the boys and everything else because they would have no part of a little baby sister.

Sr. Martin: How did she meet your father?

Mrs. Wallis: My grandfather went down to Atlanta. He was down there visiting and he met mother. My father was at Yale at the time, and my grandfather said, "Oh, I do want you to meet my son, because I think you're so attractive and I think he might find you equally attractive", so that's how it all came about.

Sr. Martin: Do you recall when your grandmother died? How old were you?

Mrs. Wallis: I think I was about 15 when she died.

Sr. Martin: That's too bad too because you would have still enjoyed knowing her.

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, absolutely. I remember I was in the Foxcroft at the time and there was much discussion as to whether I should go to Atlanta for the funeral. Miss Charlotte said that she thought it would be better if I didn't. It would be extremely upsetting and so forth. Mother said in retrospect she wished I had, so there we are. I didn't go.

Sr. Martin: Now, getting on to your schooling. You mentioned awhile ago you had governors. You didn't go to school in town?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes I did. As a matter of fact, I went to the old Normal School. I was in kindergarten. I don't think I spent too many weeks there because it seemed to me I always had a cold and went home and my family got a little tired of it. I do remember sitting down in the middle of the floor in kindergarten and crying because nobody would tie my shoes, but I did have fun. I remember as a kindergartner going out on the lawn and watching my father give the Jessie Ketchum Medal to somebody. I thought that was my earliest recollection of school really. After I got over my series of colds, as all children seem to have when they start school, I then went to Elmwood School and then later on at the age of 11, I was in school in Paris ... which was a Catholic Convent School, and I thoroughly enjoyed that. I think I probably learned more there than I learned in all the other schools put together and I was there a year. We really worked because I left on the bus at 7:30 in the morning and got home at about 7:00 at night.

Sr. Martin: Were the Sisters good to you.

Mrs. Wallis: The Sister's were marvelous and we always had a recess in the middle of the morning and then lunch and we were taken for a walk to the park. We played in the park for two hours and went back to school and then about 4:00 or 4:30 we had another recess. We were not, shall we say, at the books all the time, but we did learn, and we had to learn. They knew if we didn't learn we were definitely caught up on it. They knew a great deal of supervision which I think is a good thing for younger children.

Sr. Martin: In that school, I'm curious, did they teach you manners and related matters along with the other school things?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, and they taught us to sew and to write. I remember Elmwood had never taught anything but printing, and so when I arrived in Paris at school they said, "Oh, this is not going to be acceptable at all. You must write." I was taught to write within 24 hours, and I developed a rather scratchy looking handwriting as a result because I had no training at all. They just said, "write".

Sr. Martin: You learned French right away didn't you?

Mrs. Wallis: I grew up with a French nurse, so I was learning French and English from babyhood. I grew up bilingual.

Sr. Martin: I'm sure French is used more along with English isn't it?

Mrs. Wallis: I think it is. I found that it has been so useful through my life. I did the same thing with my children. I had a French nurse for them so they grew up bilingual.

Sr. Martin: Your mother spoke French didn't she?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, and my father did also. My father spoke French and German and English. He had a very interesting childhood being brought up by a bachelor father. My grandfather decided that he should ask this cousin of his who was, I think, a young lady of about 18, come and live with them because here he had a daughter 12 and a little boy 8 and no wife and she had recently died. So, the four of them used to travel around Europe for a year at a time and they had great friends from California named the Youngs and Mr. and Mrs. Young had four daughters and a son. The whole entourage would travel like a gypsy caravan for a year at a time throughout Europe. I don't know whether the children had tutors or what they did. They managed very well. He went to Hill School even when he was a high school student. Some of the stories of what went on in Europe with this entourage were incredible. They all got thrown out of a hotel in Paris because my father and this Edward Young decided to blow coach horns out of the window into the courtyard at 6:30 in the morning. They were promptly asked to leave the hotel. They had lots of interesting experiences. I think as a result of my father's early life he felt languages were so important and why I had a governess to learn French so early.

Sr. Martin: You had no reason even to object to that either because as you were growing up it just became a natural thing.

Mrs. Wallis: It was a perfectly natural thing. I don't ever remember learning it. I just learned both languages at the same time.

Sr. Martin: What do you dream in, English or French?

Mrs. Wallis: English. I had to stop and think a moment.

Sr. Martin: I would assume though if you were in France for a long time or a little ... where French were spoken you would probably be dreaming in French.

Mrs. Wallis: I know that it is very easy now. I have to stop and think which language am I speaking. It's so natural for me.

Sr. Martin: Language is a mysterious thing isn't it. The words, the sounds and putting it together and making sense. You mentioned the school. You had a pretty hectic school life didn't you? You enjoyed your school?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes. After leaving France, I was in school one year, and then I came back to this country and then I went to Franklin School.

Sr. Martin: Where is that?

Mrs. Wallis: It was here in Buffalo. Miss Kies was the Head Mistress. After she died, it was merged with Elmwood and became Elmwood-Franklin. Miss Kies was a marvelous school marm. She saw to it that you really learned, and I found a good foundation there as well in an American school. Then I went to St. Catherines in Richmond, Virginia from here as a boarding student and from there to Parksboro.

Sr. Martin: Did you enjoy boarding schools?

Mrs. Wallis: I did. As a matter of fact, I enjoyed some more than others. Whenever I did badly in school, and I am ashamed to say but it's the truth, that I was, shall we say, not motivated, as far as school was concerned, my mother and father, instead of thinking their little darling was at fault, would just change schools. This was, in a way, rather nice for me but an awkward situation also, and I just went on fooling through school.

Sr. Martin: I appreciate what you're saying. At least you admit this in retrospect you could see.

Mrs. Wallis: Well, exactly because I played this for a fare-thee well. It's rather like children who have divorced parents, and they play one against the other. I was having a ball doing this with schoolmates. I was at Parksboro for two years. The reason I left there was because I did not like being in the country and we were kept very much in the country in those days I thought, 'Oh, I can't stand another day of this'. And then I went to H__way Brown in Cleveland and graduated from there. Thoroughly enjoyed it because while I was a boarding student, I was older than most of them and on weekends I could do as I liked. I took a job with Arthur Murrays on the weekend, and I taught dancing I also did their exhibition work on Friday and Saturday nights in the hotels. I really thoroughly enjoyed that.

Sr. Martin: Did you learn dancing when you were home at the dancing schools here?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes.

Sr. Martin: Did you take music by any chance?

Mrs. Wallis: I took music from Mrs. Hodge. I don't think I ever progressed very far in piano.

Sr. Martin: You really had a well rounded education as a young lady growing up.

Mrs. Wallis: I remember when I was 18, I had every intention of making a career of ballroom dancing. My mother said to me, "Well, think about it. If you do this, you are going to have to practice about 7 or 8 hours every day. To get to the top you have to do this. I don't want any 'also rans.' Either get to the top or don't do it." That made me think twice. I decided that while I enjoyed it, I didn't think I really enjoyed it enough to make a career out of it.

Sr. Martin: I suppose you had Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers as stars?

Mrs. Wallis: Oh yes, absolutely. I think every young person has to try their wings doing something that they feel happy in doing.

Sr. Martin: You enjoy dancing?

Mrs. Wallis: I love to dance. After that seemed to be down the drain as far as a career was concerned, I decided to take up flying. I told my parents. My parents knew I was flying, but I didn't tell them the day I was going to solo. When I came back and said, "Oh, I've soloed", my mother said, "I thought you were soloing, I just had that feeling today, and I've been worried to death about it". I did manage to do that, but I decided that flying was not me. I found I was too undone by it. I checked out and burst into tears in my car.

Sr. Martin: But you fly though.

Mrs. Wallis: So I thought, 'Well old girl you're going to end up either getting killed or killing someone so you better just stop. You're not emotionally geared for flying'.

Sr. Martin: That's wonderful though. You went up in the air and you flew.

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, I soloed.

Sr. Martin: So you do know about airplanes?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes.

Sr. Martin: Do you have a private one?

Mrs. Wallis: No. I fly commercially. I've often thought wouldn't it be great fly, and then I think no. Too old and my reflexes aren't good enough for that. But I did have a chance to at least try my own wings and do what I thought I'd like to do.

Sr. Martin: You didn't get the certificate then?

Mrs. Wallis: No. I just soloed. I left the next day for Sun Valley.

Sr. Martin: Do you ski?

Mrs. Wallis: No. I don't ski. My children ski but I don't. I'm afraid my sports consist of horseback riding. I started at the age of 4 and I used to hunt on horseback. Then I stopped at the age of 25 when I was married. To begin with, it was too expensive to go out, maintain a horse and also very confining. Those were the war years when one couldn't find people to look after your horses. It was definitely a peace time sport.

Sr. Martin: Do you play tennis?

Mrs. Wallis: No. I never learned to do that either. I enjoyed swimming and I enjoyed dancing. Those were my two activities that I think I enjoy.

Sr. Martin: Right after you graduated I suppose you enjoyed traveling for awhile.

Mrs. Wallis: I had a coming out party right after I got out of school. As a matter fact, it was touch and go as to whether or not I would manage to make it, because I came down with chicken pox two weeks before my coming out party. My mother was just fit to be tied! Fortunately, I recovered sufficiently so that the marks didn't show. I recovered very quickly. I enjoyed my coming out party which was at the house on North Highland.

Sr. Martin: I think we have the pictures of that, or we have the invitation to it. We have some record of it.

Mrs. Wallis: I also had the pleasure of giving a coming out party there for my daughter. That was fun too.

Sr. Martin: That's right. We have a beautiful picture of that. Was that the picture with the fur muff or was that her engagement?

Mrs. Wallis: I would have to see it to know.

Sr. Martin: So both of you had a nice memory of your coming out party and your daughters.

Mrs. Wallis: My first wedding reception was at the house and my second wedding and reception was at the house.

Sr. Martin: Was that your first wedding, or your debutante, or the coming out party, or the wedding where you had the wall built around the house?

Mrs. Wallis: That was the coming out party.

Sr. Martin: Somebody mentioned that and I forgot what it was.

Mrs. Wallis: I was married in 1943 which again was the height of the war. My husband was in the navy. We had the reception there. It was a small wedding.

Sr. Martin: I look at that house when I pass it and I feel like I belong to it because I know so much about it. I always feel you needed about five more acres around it.

Mrs. Wallis: You're quite right. The house stood up rather abruptly. What happened was two brothers, both named Williams, built the two houses. The house next door, the red brick one and the one that we lived in. Unfortunately, one brother spent more money on his house than the other. The brother that had the expensive house persuaded his other brother to take some of the property off his hands because he couldn't afford it. So that's what happened. The lots were evenly divided. It would have been better had he not spent so much on the house. I think his wife must have been rather odd because she had the front stairway ripped out five times. As I understand it, she would not permit the workmen to come in except through the windows on the floors on which they were working. She was there during the finishing of the house and apparently had a complete hospital on the top floor.

Sr. Martin: In other words your grandfather didn't build the house?

Mrs. Wallis: It was there and he bought it from the Williams family. When he bought it, Mrs. Williams took herself to the top floor, to the "hospital" and she was there for a month. Finally grandfather sent her two dozen roses and a little note saying that 'it had been so nice having her as his guest'. She took the hint and left.

Sr. Martin: The house next door, was that the one that was demolished?

Mrs. Wallis: The house next door that I'm speaking of that belonged to the other Williams brother. It was bought by the Pratt family from Mrs. Pratt and her husband, Frederick Pratt and from the other Williams brother. I don't know what the Williams family did in Buffalo or anything about it. As far as I'm concerned, they just appeared and then they just sort of evaporated.

Sr. Martin: Do the Pratts still have the house next door?

Mrs. Wallis: Well it was bought by Mrs. Pratt a number of years ago. She moved to the Park Lane prior to her death and the house was sort of left to the rack and ruin. The DAR had it and all sorts of groups had it. Finally Mrs. Snyder bought it and put it in top condition.

Sr. Martin: Is that the beautiful house that has the gate? Mr. Snyder owns that?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes. He put it in shape for his business.

Sr. Martin: I thought there was a house between the Butlers and the other?

Mrs. Wallis: No. Then the so-called cottage which was recently torn down was on North Street and belonged to the family. That was also built by Stanford White. All three houses were built by Stanford White. That became a boarding house and built sort of an annex behind it. It was run down and a terrible mess. I think personally it was just as well that they tore it down.

Sr. Martin: Part of that house was taken to the Metropolitan Museum I believe, a couple of rooms.

Mrs. Wallis: Well I never saw any of that so I don't know. I was astonished to find out that it was a house of distinction. It certainly hadn't been in my lifetime.

Sr. Martin: The Snyder house is absolutely and incredibly beautiful. Your former home, it was given?

Mrs. Wallis: It was given to Roswell Park Hospital by the Baird Foundation and then actually Roswell Park. We wanted to give it to Roswell Park. Due to the fact that it was not an arms length transaction and whatnot, we had great problems tax wise. The Baird Foundation very kindly bought it and donated it to Roswell Park, and we maintained it. Roswell Park has always given every indication that they could afford to keep it up and would be able to put it in good condition and maintain. Once they received it, they suddenly found that they didn't have the funds available. They turned around and sold it to Sports Service and so Sports Service has taken it over. From what I see on the outside, they seem to be doing a very good job of putting it back in shape because my mother had been ill and really unable and uninterested in doing anything about it for the last fifteen years and so the place had really gone down quite badly.

Sr. Martin: I'm happy to see that it's being used.

Mrs. Wallis: They're not going to destroy the interior. They're going to keep it. I think that Buffalo will have a lovely Stanford White house to enjoy.

Sr. Martin: They'll have two won't they?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, the Snyder house and the Butler House and there was one across the street on North Street where Howard Johnsons now is. I was so sorry to see that house torn down because it was a charming little house and that also was Stanford White.

Sr. Martin: It must make you feel good, I know it would make me feel good to know that the house is the Butler mansion. It's used as a point of, what do you call it, somebody will say, "Well where is it", "Well it's near the Butler mansion or near Howard Johnsons". It's used as an identification and I think that's good. I hope it will always stay there.

Mrs. Wallis: I hope so too.

Sr. Martin: Then, I mentioned again about your traveling. Do you have any special memories of any special trips that you made? Did you go with your parents a lot?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes. Being an only child I was always taken. I think that's why I never learned to do very much because I was always traveling in Europe with my parents.

Sr. Martin: Did you enjoy that?

Mrs. Wallis: I loved it. Absolutely. We went to Europe every year.

Sr. Martin: You had a home in Paris didn't you?

Mrs. Wallis: Mother would rent apartments or she would rent a house or something like that and we would be in and out. We never actually had any property over there.

Sr. Martin: You didn't. Well I understand, and correct me on this, I believe that during the war the Germans took over your apartment, and some of the furniture was returned later.

Mrs. Wallis: Mother had purchased furniture and had left it at the dealers. When the Germans took a great deal of it, we never did get that. I suppose in a way it was just as well that we didn't have property over there. It would have been an awful problem during the war to know what might have happened.

Sr. Martin: Your mother knew French too then?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes. She had learned and she had studied piano in Paris for a number of years under Muskowski and there was quite a well known edition at that time and she was over there so she spoke fluent French also and loved Paris.

Sr. Martin: She loved Paris. I gather that from her writing, from her collection.

Mrs. Wallis: We had a number of friends over there and still do, as a matter of fact, when we go over. My mother and father when they were in Paris and later years always stayed at the Ritz. So now the Ritz is like my second home because all the personnel are still there and so I go in and they seem to be delighted to see old clients too. We feel part of the Ritz family. I would say that is our home away from home.

Sr. Martin: Of all cities, you like Paris above all the others?

Mrs. Wallis: Well I think I feel more at home there because of having spent so much time there.

Sr. Martin: Did you enjoy going through Germany or Italy?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes I did. With my present husband, whose business is entirely overseas, we travel about six or seven months and we go all over the world. We're in the Far East and South America and Europe and the whole thing. We both love Paris.

Sr. Martin: Is there any place you dread going back to? Any particular part of the world that you just as soon not go?

Mrs. Wallis: Well yes, I suppose everyone has his preferences. I think that after the trips that I have made, is Equador. As far as I'm concerned I can forget it. Guadakeela, I have never been to Quitos. In all fairness I shouldn't perhaps say that but Guadakeela is the jumping off spot of the world.

Sr. Martin: What about Africa?

Mrs. Wallis: I have not been to South Africa, unfortunately, but I would like to. I've been to Australia and it's interesting, I made three trips out there and it wouldn't bother me not to go back. I enjoy Africa. I love Egypt and I love Morocco and all of that. I think I just like everything that's sort of a little different.

Sr. Martin: When you go to these cities do you go around as a tourist and see the places or once you've been there that you don't have to go back?

Mrs. Wallis: I do. One of the things that makes travel so interesting is that my husband knows people everywhere because he's there on business. That gives us clean entree, and they open the doors to us. We see quite a different side of the country from what we would strictly as tourists. Then I have time to go and do the sightseeing in the galleries and whatnot, and that makes it interesting.

Sr. Martin: You've really been fortunate.

Mrs. Wallis: I have. I've had a very interesting life.

Sr. Martin: And the fact that you enjoy it too because you could get travel sick.

Mrs. Wallis: I thoroughly enjoy it. It doesn't bother me to fly 22 hours on a plane whenever.

Sr. Martin: Getting back now to your parents. When did you become involved with the college? I guess you were always aware that your father was quite interested in the college. Now, this always amazes me. This is a state institution and your family has given its blood, sweat and tear to this place. You didn't have to. Ordinarily, families as well known as yours could give to private institutions. Your mother was quite interested in universities. But yet, the concern and the love that your grandfather, and then your father and then you gave to this institution is really beyond the call of duty, and I think that's great. What caused all this?

Mrs. Wallis: Well, I think perhaps it was a question of family tradition. The fact that it was very small when my grandfather was associated with it and it sort of grew up as his baby. My father then felt what he would like to take on the baby and see it grow which, goodness knows, it did under his guidance. I had always heard of it and had been sort of interested and taken in on the conversations that had been brought over here for various programs. I felt that I too would be very happy being associated with it because I felt that it was a tremendous challenge and I wanted to carry on that tradition and the challenge.

Sr. Martin: It developed the greatest under you, in the 50s and 60s.

Mrs. Wallis: That's when everything grew.

Sr. Martin: The building. I'm sure that when your father died that must have been a terrible thing for you too, a traumatic experience.

Mrs. Wallis: It was. It was a tremendous shock because he had had a gall bladder operation and there was no indication that he wasn't getting along beautifully and then suddenly to go in his sleep which was wonderful for him but a terrible shock.

Sr. Martin: He died in his sleep didn't he? How did it affect your mother?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, absolutely. I think oftentimes older people seem to be able to take things in stride better than younger ones. I remember it was a tremendous shock for me and a tremendous thing for me to get over. It took me 8 or 9 years to really get over it and accept it.

Sr. Martin: He was such a vital man and so active and such a bright man. He was charming and into everything.

Mrs. Wallis: He loved people and loved challenges and I can remember him talking about the dormitory authority. I remember that he was not terribly happy with the dormitory authority. I think it proved to be a thorn in his side as well as Rockwell because in those days the men themselves ran the college as they saw fit and they didn't like having all this bureaucracy trimming their wings. I can remember my father half talking with himself and

half talking with me while he was tying his tie in the bathroom about, "Darn this dormitory authority. I have to go to a meeting and talk to Frank Moore about this" and so on. Little people pick up these things and listen very intently and it may not register too clearly at the time but it all comes back later on. I always had this sort of background because I would hear things discussed and so I felt that this was very natural and normal and I was very happy to be able to be a part of it. My father said, "Would you like to go on after I retire", and I said, "Oh my goodness, yes, I certainly would. There is nothing that would give me greater pleasure."

Sr. Martin: Had you thought that you would?

Mrs. Wallis: I had hoped but I didn't feel it was up to me to say anything.

Sr. Martin: I wondered at that time whether you thought that because you were a woman they would keep you from it.

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, there were women on so I hoped I would be asked to serve and I felt very fortunate.

Sr. Martin: Along that time had you ever been involved in the Buffalo Evening News personally?

Mrs. Wallis: No, because my father felt that that was not a place for a woman. Perhaps it was a question that he felt that I would be getting into situations which could prove embarrassing for him or what I don't know. I think this was before the days of women's participation in business. He did not seem to want me to be down there but I was brought up from my earliest recollections that the Buffalo Evening News came first and it was definitely a public service institution and that one must work for the public and that the public didn't work for the news. Everything that was done should be done with the best interest of the public. When I was a little older and doing the nightclubs my father said, "Oh, I'm not going to say you can't go there. I just want you to know that if it's raided your name will appear along with everyone else's and just keep that in mind." So for the sake of the news and the family I was always very careful. I grew up thinking the same thing that the News came first and family second. It was a perfectly normal reaction as far as I was concerned. I think one of the saddest days of my life was when we were forced to sell the paper because it simply could not be run by seven lawyers and division in feeling from the family. Also, there was a great deal that had to be done that had been let slide because of the fact that my mother had not been foresighted enough to have it done. We were back on technology and we were back on a number of things. It was going to require a lot of money and then when my mother died with the inheritance taxes what they were at that time there was no way we could do all of these things that needed to be done and needed to be done quickly and keep everything going.

Sr. Martin: Your mother did a remarkable job didn't she? Now that was the time when women really didn't do that much.

Mrs. Wallis: That was when women were beginning to emerge in industry. I still feel that being a newspaper publisher is not the job for a woman because I think it does more damage to the woman than perhaps any other sort of positions. There are many positions women do and women do admirably but that isn't one of them. I find that they have become masculine women and they loose their touch with reality.

Sr. Martin: Your mother was such a charming woman.

Mrs. Wallis: She tackled that I think perhaps had she been going into it, had she done it earlier in life, it would have been better for her and the paper because she would have had the foresight to see what had to be done and would have done it.

Sr. Martin: She did it out of loyalty to your father didn't she and to the family? She wanted to keep it going didn't she?

Mrs. Wallis: She wanted to do it. My father would never let her get into the paper at all, she wanted to. I think she felt that this was definitely an ego trip.

Sr. Martin: Your mother was quite an independent woman wasn't she?

Mrs. Wallis: Very independent. She would take nobody's advice which was very difficult in the family.

Sr. Martin: I gathered that from some of the letters your father wrote her telling her to come back home. She wasn't about to come back home. She was going to come back home when she wanted to come back home and that was it. I marvel at that and I thought, "Oh your sweet daddy!" I was on the side of your father, I hate to say it but I was.

Mrs. Wallis: So was I. I'll be perfectly truthful and say that.

Sr. Martin: I thought your mother was a little bit hard on your father.

Mrs. Wallis: She was. She was definitely an egotistical lady.

Sr. Martin: Your father adored her didn't he?

Mrs. Wallis: He did.

Sr. Martin: In the letters that he wrote he called her, I had forgotten the name, he had a little nickname for her, and it was so sweet. There is nothing terrible, they're beautiful. They testify to the love of a man for a woman.

Mrs. Wallis: She was very difficult and gave him many heartaches. I felt very sorry about it.

Sr. Martin: I just marvel that there wasn't a breakup.

Mrs. Wallis: The reason there wasn't was because of me which didn't make me feel all that happy shall we say. I felt that had I not been in the picture they could have gone their own way and probably had much happier lives but then after I was married they seemed to patch things up. Mother had gotten older and decided that she couldn't travel as much.

Sr. Martin: Yes and your father loved her too. I think that's beautiful. It certainly was a testimony to your father. I have all the letters he wrote her during the war when he was over in Europe and then, of course, she saved all his letters and all your letters. She saved everything. I'm amazed at that because I didn't think that was the kind of woman she was.

Mrs. Wallis: She had a dual personality. She found it very difficult to express her feelings and so consequently she put on and she did things that were, in some cases, unforgivable. I think you often judge people by their actions rather than what may be behind all of this because nobody has the opportunity to help what goes on.

Sr. Martin: Maybe because she was so much younger than the rest of her sisters or brothers. She was pampered. That had an affect on her life.

Mrs. Wallis: As a result, it made life very difficult for the rest of the family. She was very difficult in the business as far as my husband was concerned.

Sr. Martin: Are you pleased with the Buffalo Evening News now? I'm sure you're following its direction. To us it hasn't changed any but maybe to you it has.

Mrs. Wallis: I do not find that it's the same paper and I'm not at all happy with what's happening and I find that the person who bought it has not had the interest of the community at heart. This was the first newspaper he has ever owned and he bought it on an ego trip. He owns ten percent of the Washington Post. Mr. Buffett has been great success financially and in the stock market but this was his first venture with a metropolitan newspaper. He owned several weeklies and I think he bought the paper with the idea of an ego trip really and became very greedy. Instead of coming into the community and helping the Courier which he could have done but having one area of publication and then having two separate editorial policies and they could have all saved money and could have all gotten along very nicely he didn't do that. He just tried to run them out of business. Consequently, the Courier decided to sell to the Coles family and this Coles operation is a very successful chain operation with lots of money behind them and lots of expertise.

Sr. Martin: That's where I got confused, it's the Coles.

Mrs. Wallis: I really feel that the News is going to have a very tough going if they are in any competition with a group like the Coles because they do a good job. As a matter of fact, I had contemplated that had it been possible to keep the paper of the ways that we could do this and having it an amicable situation with both papers in Buffalo owned by Buffalo presidents and it would have worked out, but unfortunately, I guess the cards were stacked against it.

Sr. Martin: Your son didn't want to have anything. Was he trained for that?

Mrs. Wallis: I think he would have but at the time the problem seemed to be so astronomical but we couldn't see how it could work out and I think that with the taxes and the time that was permitted that we could make it work. But perhaps if it falls flat on its face we might be back in it again.

Sr. Martin: It would be tragic not to have an evening paper. There's just no doubt about it, a morning and evening paper. There is a tremendous competition, particularly the Sunday edition.

Mrs. Wallis: Then again, of course, when I think back about how the paper was originally started and how many people gave their lives for it. It just doesn't seem right not to have.

Sr. Martin: When did you become involved in the college? That 's a silly question because you've answered it already. In 1955 you came on the Council. Your father died in 1955 too didn't he?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, he did. I had been appointed by Governor Dewey. I think I had come on the Council in August of 1955. No, I guess I came on in 1954 because my father died in February of 1955.

Sr. Martin: You were on it before your father died? He knew that.

Mrs. Wallis: I think this is the way it was but you know my memory is not that fine.

Sr. Martin: Did you find it easy to become a member of the Council because you knew so much about the college.

Mrs. Wallis: I found it very easy and the Chairman was Judge Mole who is charming and delightful person and who gave me a lot of help and a lot of instruction and is a very good friend of the college and also I think of mine as well. He really sort of broke me in.

Sr. Martin: You became Chairman in 1959 and you've been there since then until you retired this past year I believe.

Mrs. Wallis: That's right.

Sr. Martin: You've given a lot of time to that. That's a lot of work.

Mrs. Wallis: I've enjoyed every minute of it.

Sr. Martin: Did you have a secretary that could do the work?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes I have a secretary.

Sr. Martin: Did she do all the work, the typing and everything.

Mrs. Wallis: Most of the typing was done by Miss Tiberia. She had everything done and all the agendas and the whole thing and I would come over and talk with the President about what we were going to discuss and what had to be taken care of and so forth. I always worked very closely with the Presidents.

Sr. Martin: You knew every one of them didn't you?

Mrs. Wallis: I have indeed. As a child I knew Dr. Rockwell.

Sr. Martin: Was he like a father or grandfather. What is your impression of him.

Mrs. Wallis: He and my father were such good friends that he was just a great friend and I didn't have any feeling of strangeness.

Sr. Martin: They really were good friends weren't they?

Mrs. Wallis: They were.

Sr. Martin: He was quite a man.

Mrs. Wallis: He certainly was and so my father and he would laugh, joke and tell stories and whatnot and I would go and see him.

Sr. Martin: Was he at the house often?

Mrs. Wallis: He came to the house quite often. I thoroughly enjoyed that and then I would be taken to puppet shows and all sorts of things that they'd had at the college in those days. I felt very much at home here.

Sr. Martin: You knew Mrs. Rockwell?

Mrs. Wallis: Yes.

Sr. Martin: I understand Dr. Rice was very different from Dr. Rockwell.

Mrs. Wallis: He was indeed. As a matter of fact, he was President when I came on board and he and his wife were very much interested in the theater. I can remember saying to Harvey when he had decided that he was going to leave, I said, "Well you know, you really are not cut for education, you should be in the advertising agency or you should be in the theater, because this is not your cup of tea at all." I don't know whether he liked it or not but he had said he was going but I didn't feel that I was being rude.

Sr. Martin: He was a very handsome man and very well liked I understand and very good. He and his wife were very charming here.

Mrs. Wallis: Very delightful but totally unsuited for the role.

Sr. Martin: He took part in everything.

Mrs. Wallis: He took part in it but he was definitely theatrically inclined. He missed his calling, he should have been in the theater.

Sr. Martin: When I speak to anyone who knew Dr. Rice, the first thing they say is, "Well, the first time we met Dr. Rice he knew everybody's name." The first faculty meeting somebody would raise his hand and he would call on Dr. Irvin or Dr. Sherry. He knew them. That just actually floored them. But if it weren't for that theatrical training he memorized everything and knew everybody his name before he ever met them.

Mrs. Wallis: He was excellent. Dr. Rockwell was very much a businessman and I think with this other totally different image surprised everyone.

Sr. Martin: It was sort of a relief though in a sense because the world was changing.

Mrs. Wallis: The world was changing and I have always been a great believer that participants have to be different because a college is a moving situation that depends entirely on the mood of the times and the world situation and because it reflects the people whether its students in the college.

Sr. Martin: Dr. Bulger. I think more changes took place under him didn't they.

Mrs. Wallis: Yes. He was marvelous for that time in the college and I think this is what everybody had to think about is the college president who is right for the times.

Sr. Martin: He certainly seemed to be. He's such a dear. I've met him and talked with him and had an interview and he was a gentlemen and he knew everybody and he would be kind to everybody no matter if it was even just a secretary or vice president he was delightful to everybody. Mrs. Bulger was too. Then the buildings were constructed in the 1960s and the dedication week of 1963 must have kept you quite busy.

Mrs. Wallis: It certainly did. I remember I was changing hats and clothes quite frequently. It was an exciting time.

Sr. Martin: Speaking of buildings, of course, this building where we're situated right now, the E. H. Butler Library, has one thing against it right now. There's no name on it. The E. H. Butler Library is not on the library. It's the only building on the campus that doesn't have a name on it. We understand the architect says no. Mrs. Hall, who is the Acting Director right now, we've been fighting for this. There's not a sign on the campus.

Mrs. Wallis: I think that's dreadful and we should do something about that.

Sr. Martin: You didn't realize that.

Mrs. Wallis: No I didn't. Actually I wondered about it and I have looked around and then I thought because it was a building that had been wrapped around, so to speak, to make it bigger, that maybe the Edward H. Butler Library was marked on the inside on the original building.

Sr. Martin: It had E. H. Butler Library in big letters. We don't know what happened to those whether they had been taken and destroyed or not. I don't know why I cannot get an answer to the question. As an archivist I'm interested in this. Furthermore, I'm interested in having a building identified when people come on campus. They don't know where the library is. It's the largest building.

Mrs. Wallis: I think we should do something about this.

Sr. Martin: You were here at the dedication of both of them.

Mrs. Wallis: Yes, I was. I'll never forget that day because I liked Governor Dewey but I never liked him as much as I did that day because he caught the gleam in my sons eyes when he had that trowel in the cement and I knew we were all going to have cement from head to foot. Fortunately Governor Dewey caught the gleam too so he put his hand firmly on this little white hand and said, "No you don't!" I was standing too far away to do anything. What are you going to do you can't scream out, "Don't you dare!"

Sr. Martin: Was your daughter there?

Mrs. Wallis: No, she was a baby at that time. She was too little. She assisted in the dedication of the library, this one.

Sr. Martin: I still think though, of the two buildings, the first one was the handsomer. I never saw it because I didn't come up from Dallas, Texas until 1968 and I came here because of this wraparound. I came in 1969-70. I have all the pictures of this building and it was a dream and the people who worked there. It seemed to me it would have been better to destroy the whole

thing. We have all our leaks because of that. It was five and a half million dollars or something like that. I'm very happy and I'm sure you are too. It was the first building constructed in 1951, one of the first buildings and it was named after your grandfather, but it's still your father's name too. I think that's great because certainly your grandparents and your father gave their blood, sweat and tears to the place and I can't think of a better building.

Mrs. Wallis: I think we should very definitely make an effort to see to it. I think I will trot myself right up to Dr. Johnstone's office.

Sr. Martin: Looking back over the years that you were the local Chairman, what things are you sort of proud of that you were able to get through or do? Is that a difficult question?

Mrs. Wallis: No. I think what I enjoyed most and which I thought was the fact that I was taken into the meetings of our expansion of the buildings and what was going to happen and how they were going to be done. I think one of the things that stands out in my mind was the fact that we were the first college in New York State or first college or university in the State University system that had a master plan and when Governor Rockefeller came on campus he had said that the colleges and universities should have a master plan and we were the first to produce one. He was very impressed when he came on campus and saw that we knew where we were going and knew what we were doing and could show him diagrams of what was contemplating. Consequently, I would say we had two feet on the ladder after that meeting as to what was going to happen. That was one of the foremost things that started us really on our upgrading of buildings and land and the whole thing.

Sr. Martin: I gather from what I've read and what I've heard that there was always a good relationship between the administration and Council. You were always in very close contact.

Mrs. Wallis: Yes and some Council members were a little obstreperous but I think over the years we really did have a very good rapport and worked together. I think that certainly there was never really any dissension in the ranks which is fortunate. I don't think any institution can run if there is dissension. We always work together very well. I think one of the fun things is the meetings we had in choosing the president. It gave the Council and the faculty to know each other on a different basis and I enjoyed those sessions. They were very worthwhile from my point of view.

Sr. Martin: You have seen this college grow from a small faculty and enrollment to the mammoth thing it is and as one professor said, "When I came I knew every single professor and every single student by name and now that I'm retiring I don't even know the names of everybody in the department."

Mrs. Wallis: I think this is true and this is the unfortunate thing that happens with growth, you can't help it. I do remember some of the fun that we had when we were going ahead and building the buildings. I remember I rode on

a tractor and that was marvelous. I guess it was a bulldozer. I was right out there with Charlie Ball. I had my picture taken. There were so many fun things that were connected with it that I enjoyed so much.

Sr. Martin: Do you want to say anything else about the Council?

Mrs. Wallis: Just that we have been very fortunate over the years in having very good Councils who were dedicated to the college and to its betterment and worked very hard and very diligently for it. I think we were very lucky.

Sr. Martin: I'll tell you something humorous. Not until I met Mrs. Vogelsang, you know Harriet, that I realized that Mrs. Campbell, who was on the Council for a far more number of years than I thought she was, she was under three different names. All of her husbands had died and she had been married and she's Campbell now, Mrs. Vogelsang first and then there was another name.

Mrs. Wallis: Then she was Walker and I think she was something between Vogelsang and Walker. Maybe it was Vogelsang, Walker then Campbell.

Sr. Martin: I have the history of the Council and I want to put an asterisk there to let people know it's the same person. It looks like it's three different people. If somebody wanted to have this anniversary, the 50th anniversary of 31-81 coming over here and she's going to be one of the speaker and I thought well now it says there so many years on the Council. If you were to go back and look, you wouldn't see Campbells name that far back. How could that be, well she was under another name.

Mrs. Wallis: It's the same with me. I was Righter.

Sr. Martin: Your children now, where are they?

Mrs. Wallis: My daughter has a house in Catona, New York and she has two children, a little girl 2-1/2 and a little boy 4-1/2. She is in the process of a divorce. My son has a daughter 11 and he's married to his second wife and he lives in Springville, New York.

Sr. Martin: That's a lovely place. Do you think your daughter will be coming back here?

Mrs. Wallis: I think she will continue living in New York or the New York area. For awhile she was living in the Adirondacks 12 months year and then she decided she couldn't take that and so she moved to Catona which is about an hour from New York two years ago. I think she enjoys that area because she can get into New York and we spend so much time there now. It's fun for me to have her there.

Sr. Martin: You mentioned awhile ago before we started to tape that your interest now is in interior decorating?

Mrs. Wallis: I'm in an interior decorating firm called Nolls-Wallis and we have a place in Florida. Our headquarters is in Sarasota now that I'm a legal Florida resident. That's the reason I resigned from the college Council because I have to become legal resident of Florida for tax reasons. That was the reason for getting off the Council. One has to be out of New York State six months and three days to qualify as an out-of-state resident. Of course this is not difficult because my husband travels six or seven months a year so we are out of the state and country really and I'm in this interior decorating with Peter Nolls and we're doing very well. Enjoying it thoroughly. We also sell Continental and English antique furniture.

Sr. Martin: With your education and background and travels you should have quite an expertise on this too.

Mrs. Wallis: I enjoy it. My husband being British has been brought up in this sort of thing too. He was born in India. His father with the British Raj, an army officer. My husband went to Oxford and served in the British navy and the British diplomatic service for 10 years. He's had a very interesting career.

Sr. Martin: Where did you meet him?

Mrs. Wallis: I met him in New York and this great friend of ours who is Chairman of the Board of Price Paper Corporation, who lived in New York, he and his wife, and I was in New York during the process of getting a divorce and so he had me over for dinner very often with his wife. He said, "Oh I have a friend I want you to meet." Expecting it to be a very pleasant evening for all of us we went out dancing. He was amazed to find that he just took off and it was Bruce Wallis. So that's how we happened to meet.

Sr. Martin: How long has that been now?

Mrs. Wallis: We've been married eight years. It was about 10 years ago. The only way I can really remember the year I was married the first time in 1943 and the second in 1973.

Sr. Martin: Is there anything else now that you can think of that you would like to have on the record.

Mrs. Wallis: I can't think of anything. Are there any other questions?

Sr. Martin: I've reached the end. I've got your special interests and activities. Of course, we know you love to travel and that your interested in interior decorating and in people. You're still interested in the college and you keep up with that. I'm sure you will. You don't have much vacation to come back to town now do you?

Mrs. Wallis: We have an apartment here at the Park Lane and so we do come back and my husband enjoys being in Buffalo in the summer time. Now being a consultant he can now take time off when he wants to and so he comes up and plays golf and we enjoy seeing our friends here and spending time.

Sr. Martin: Do you go back to England to visit his family?

Mrs. Wallis: His father is retired and lives in Vancouver so he has a sister living in England and, of course, we do go to England on business. We see his sister and brother-in-law when we're over there.

Sr. Martin: I think we've come to the end now and I sure do thank you very much.

Mrs. Wallis: Thank you so much, I certainly have enjoyed our visit.