3-18-2012

Interview with Bill White

Bill White

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<th><strong>Author (Interviewer)</strong></th>
<th>Lammons Katelyn Nicole</th>
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<td><strong>Full Name</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Date of Birth</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Title of Interview</strong></td>
<td>Interview with Mr. Bill White</td>
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<td><strong>Date of Interview</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Place of Interview</strong></td>
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**Abstract of the content of the interview:**

**Person Interviewed:** White William Doyle

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<td>Known by any other names? (list)</td>
<td>Bill</td>
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<td><strong>Date of Birth</strong></td>
<td>July 15, 1938</td>
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**Geographic Places as Subjects within the interview:**

- **State:** Arkansas
- **County:** Pulaski
- **City/Community:** Searcy, Little Rock
- **Time Period/Years:** 1955 - 2012

**Person as Subjects within the Interview:**

- **Title:** Mr
- **Last Name:** White
- **First Name:** William
- **Middle Name:** Doyle
- **DOB:** 7/15/38

**Events as Subjects within the Interview:**

- **Specific Date(s):** University of Arkansas, 1953 - 1960

**Other Major Places as Subjects within the Interview:**

- **State:** AR
- **County:** White
- **City/Community:** Searcy
- **Time Period/Years:** 1990s - 2012

**Other Notes:**

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Interview with Mr. Bill White

Interviewer: Katelyn Lammons

Date of Interview: March 18, 2012
Biography

Bill White was born on July 15, 1938 in Keo, Arkansas. He lived here for a short time spending most of his childhood in Little Rock. He attended high school at Little Rock Central and went on to go to the University where he studied medicine and was heavily involved with the music programs. He moved back to Searcy where most of his family now resides. He serves on the Bison Booster Board at Harding. He retired from the military and the VA after 20 years of service. Persons interested in the medical field history in Arkansas or activities from the University of Arkansas will find this interview helpful.
Katelyn: So, where in Arkansas are you from, originally?

Mr. White: I was born in England, Arkansas.

K: Oh okay, I have a friend from there. So, near Little Rock?

Mr. White: About 20-30 miles south.

K: Okay, so what year did you graduate from high school?

Mr. White: 1955.

K: Oh okay, well that’s fun. So you remember vividly Little Rock 9? The crisis in Little Rock.

Mr. White: I graduated from Little Rock Central in 1955

K: Are you serious?

Mr. White: My parents were teachers and administrators in the Little Rock school system. My mother was the math chairman at Central High. I was at the University at that time. My mother and father’s house was where the guards and the servicemen stayed, on their porch.

K: So that close?

Mr. White: That close.

K: That is really cool.

Mr. White: Less than 2 blocks from Little Rock Central.

K: So you were already at the University of Arkansas by then?

Mr. White: Yes.
K: So are you a big razorback fan?

Mr. White: Oh yes!

K: What's your best memory at the University?

Mr. White: My wife.

K: Oh yeah? Is that where you guys met? (His wife was in the other room with my friend, their granddaughter, Cara.) That's so sweet. Do you have any memories of living in Arkansas during World War 2?

Mr. White: A Little. I had an uncle who was off in Germany. I kept up with him, but the war was pretty much over by the time I was 6 or 7 so I don't remember a lot about it. I remember the little boxes they put together. They'd take crayon or chalk boxes and pack them with goodies to send to the soldiers.

K: That's really cool. Is there anything you want to talk about? Is Arkansas really important to you? Have you always lived in Arkansas? Did you ever leave?

Mr. White: Oh okay, that'll get me started. I moved from England, actually a little town called Keo. I put England on my birth certificate because I was born out in the country. We moved from there when I was 9 months old to Rose Bud. My dad was superintendent of the schools there. I lived there until I had finished the 5th grade and that's when we moved to Pine Bluff. I lived down there through junior high school and then moved to Little Rock to go to Little Rock Central. Little Rock Central was the only high school in Little Rock at that time.

K: Oh really, I didn't know that.
Mr. White: It was a large school. My folks were schoolteachers and administrators so the move was geared towards better jobs in places they thought would be helpful to me. So I went to Little Rock Central. And then I went to Fayetteville. My degree was in music but I was a pre-med major. After I graduated from there, I went to the University of Chicago for medical school. And while there I sang with an opera company in several roles. Then I moved back to Little Rock for an internship.

K: A medical one?

Mr. White: Yes. And after the internship, I was in the service for 3 years.

K: What branch?

Mr. White: Kind of a devious story, I was drafted by the Navy but I actually served in the Indian Health Service as a commissioned Officer, as a GP. Then I came back to Little Rock as medical resident and took a medical residency and then a fellowship in digestive disease. Then after that I moved to Searcy in 1970 and I’ve lived here ever since.

K: How many kids do you have?

Mr. White: I have four living. One that died on March 18th, which is tomorrow. My oldest is your friend’s father (Cara) is Mark. He’s a radiologist. My daughter, the only daughter I have, is a music professor over at Harding. Then the next son is a family physician, Jonathon. And the next and last child is David. He has a PhD and he’s a counselor at Harding.

K: So they all sort of followed you doing medical and music!

Mr. White: Sort of, yes. I have 9 grandchildren ranging from 7 to 25.
K: Cara’s older brother being the oldest?

Mr. White: Yes, her older brother Grant is in a doctoral program in math at Fayetteville. He’s married to an RN. The rest of them all live here.

K: In Searcy? So you love that your family is just all around here.. Well that’s cool. Where do you guys go to church?

Mr. White: We go to the College Church.

K: That’s where I go usually when I am in town. When you sang in Chicago, what’s the coolest place that you got to perform?

Mr. White: I sang at Orchestra Hall, actually that’s not true, the coolest place I got to sing was the Chicago Symphony, I got to sing with the symphony. I won a competition and I got to sing there.

K: That’s really cool.

Mr. White: That was the coolest place.

K: When did you do that?

Mr. White: It would have been in like 1959, somewhere along in there, before I graduated from medical school. I studied music another 4 years, concurrently took all voice and opera classes for 4 years while I was in medical school.

K: And then you got drafted? What year did you get drafted?

Mr. White: Either late 1963 or early 1964.
K: Where did you serve?

Mr. White: I served in Oklahoma on the Indian Reservation.

K: So you never had to go overseas?

Mr. White: Nope, I was a commissioned officer but I never had to go.

K: Well that’s good. Were you officer because you already had a degree?

Mr. White: I had a medical degree, right. I was commissioned core. If I were in the Navy I would be called a Lieutenant Commander and in the Public Health Service I was called a Surgeon.

K: So after you were in Oklahoma with the Indians did you come back to Arkansas?

Mr. White: Mhm.

K: Did you play any sports for Little Rock Central?

Mr. White: I concentrated a lot more on track and field. I was a lot bigger than I am now, but I threw the Shot and Discus and then threw it for the University of Arkansas.

K: Really?

Mr. White: I lettered there. People that look at me now wouldn’t believe that I weighed 50 or 60 more pounds than I do now.

K: Really? How tall are you?

Mr. White: Well, I’ve shrunk about an inch and a half. I was 6’2 ¾ and I’m about 6’0 now.

You don’t want to know how much I weighed.
K: When you did track and field?

Mr. White: You could figure it out. I weighed about 245-250 and didn’t have as much fat.

K: You were all muscle.

Mr. White: I had a belly too.

K: I don’t believe it, I bet you were very thin to have done track and field.

Mr. White: But I’d run a lot. I took up running Afterwards and I’ve run lots of marathons til I had a bad knee. For about 30 years I averaged no less than 7 miles a day for the whole year, you know averaged out 365 times 7, it’d be that. Some years I’d average as much as 11.

K: How many marathons have you done?

Mr. White: A bunch, including Boston.

K: So some big ones? Have you run the one in Memphis, St. Judes?

Mr. White: No, I quit running marathons back in the 80s and 90s. I just didn’t have the desire to. I love to run. I play a lot of golf, but I’d rather run than play golf. I just have a bum knee.

K: Did you have to have surgery?

Mr. White: Not yet! But that’s just coming.

K: Well hopefully you don’t have to do that. Whose your favorite golfer?

Mr. White: I like Phil Mickelson.

K: I LOVE Phil Mickelson.
Mr. White: Because of what he represents.

K: I do too. He’s so great.

Mr. White: He was so sweet to his wife and family.

K: When she had cancer.

Mr. White: He gave up everything for her during that period of time, and that’s good. All the women love him.

K: Yes I love him. He’s my mom’s favorite golfer so I grew up following him around The Players Championship at Sawgrass in Florida.

Mr. White: Sawgrass is a really nice course, the one with that kind of island.

K: Yes. In fact, I think that’s the 16th or 18th hole.

Mr. White: Those are fun.

K: It’s beautiful, I love it. So are you a big razorback football fan?

Mr. White: yes.

K: Do yall have season tickets?

Mr. White: No, I’m on the Bison Booster Board here, and I don’t travel like I used too. It’s difficult for her to travel (his wife). And you know if you go up with someone, you go up the night before, and I have kids, grandchildren, who play sports here at the Academy so I go to their games.

K: That’s important. Anything that you want to talk about?
Mr. White: Well, let’s see. Want to know what my current job is?

K: Yes!

Mr. White: I’m the medical director for the Physicians Assistant Program at Harding as a professor. I work at least one day a week as a physician for the VA. Before I came back to do that here, I was in private practice here for about 20 some odd years. Then I went down to VA as an Associate Chief of Staff and as an Associate Professor of Medicine at the med school. And Associate Dean in the college of health related professions. I’m just an associate everywhere I go. I technically retired from the military and the VA with 20 years of service.

K: The VA you worked at, is that the one in Little Rock?

Mr. White: Yes the one in Little Rock and North Little Rock, it’s the whole complex.

K: I’ve driven past it and I have lots of family that does military so I always think of them when I pass it. What is your favorite memory of growing up in Arkansas?

Mr. White: Well I had a lot from Rose Bud, that’s where I was kid, basically. It was a very country place with little streams you could walk up and fish in and be imaginary characters. That was good ya know, I had lots of things I was.

K: Yeah, definitely.

Mr. White: You know, Indians, and police men and baseball players.

K: Did you build a lot of forts out in the woods?

Mr. White: No, but I had lots of friends that you couldn’t see that were out there that I played with. After that, life got involved with music and sports and my wife. We met, I should
probably tell you about this, you got a little time left? We met, I was actually in pre med and ROTC and we sang in an opera together. We had our first date on Valentine’s Day when I was a sophomore.

**K:** How romantic.

**Mr. White:** You’re listening, aren’t you (to his wife)? You know, we may have seen each other and have gone out for cokes and things like that but this was the first date. I told her that day, I was a sophomore and she was a senior, that I intended to marry her.

**K:** On your first date?

**Mr. White:** Yeah. It took me awhile to get that lined up, but we married right after college.

**K:** Before you went to Chicago?

**Mr. White:** Yes, and of significant emphasis is that our first two children, Mark and Lauren, were both born on Valentines Day, both at 7:10 PM.

**K:** Are you serious?

**Mr. White:** Mhm, 2 years to the minute on Valentines Day. So I have to be a good boy on Valentines Day. No reason for me to ever forget that date.

**K:** Your first date and you have two kids that have the same birthday!

**Mr. White:** That’s right.

**K:** That’s so crazy. That is weird to have the same birthday as your sibling. Did that ever cause problems growing up with them? Did you have to have combined birthday parties?
Mr. White: Oh, it was fun! I think it was fun for them to celebrate together. And you know by the time you get out 9, 10 or 11, you know birthdays are kind of routine anyway. But I'll give you some more important things that I would want people to know about me; I do not deserve it and my life does not always deserve it but I've been an elder at the College Church since the late 70s. I'm also a regular song leader there.

K: Yes, I've seen you there leading songs!

Mr. White: That's real important to me.

K: Yes and lots of good guys are elders there. Paul Pollard's daughter and her family go to my church at home in Jacksonville, Florida, so I always get to see Paul and Sherry when they are down there visiting.

Mr. White: The interesting thing about them though, is they're liars.

K: They're liars? What do you mean?

Mr. White: They allege that they have been married 42 or 43 years, but you know by looking at them they are only 40 or 45.

K: They seriously look so young.

Mr. White: You shouldn't say that since they are a friend of mine and a fellow elder, that they are liars. If you want something humorous to go on there, I just saw something in the paper. There's a story about Dr. Donald Patrick, he's a cardiovascular surgeon here in town, that he's going to be a Grand Marshall for an Easter parade. It described his wife as being the chief of the operating room area as an RN and that his importance was "theoretic" vascular surgery, not thoracic, but theoretic.
K: So, not real? Oh man, that's kind of embarrassing. I feel bad for him.

Mr. White: I haven't had a chance to tell them. I was going to cut it off and put it on the bulletin board.

K: At church?

Mr. White: At school. And say maybe we could use him as a preceptor for our PA program.

K: That is funny. Well is there anything else? Any closing statements that you would like to make? Did you ever go to Harding or do you just work there?

Mr. White: No, I didn't. At the time that I was in college, the pre med program was not as influential. It is very influential now. Harding and Hendricks have the best records of students with their grades and everything. And the other was that I wanted to participate in sports. You won't put this down I'm sure, but I was the third best in the state in both the shot and discus. So, I was able to participate in the South West conference, even in my freshman year. So, I wanted to go to do that. Track and field at that time was not a big scholarship like it is now. If I had been real good, maybe I would have. But I got to travel and do that. Let's see, what else. I had a great time in college. I participated in sports, I was in 15 operas, I sang in the chorus, I met my wife.

K: You had a good time, even though you weren't at Harding.

Mr. White: All of my children and grandchildren have or are going to Harding. I was a faculty member part-time while I did my practice. I taught voice one year.

K: At Harding?
Mr. White: While I was here. And you know I think it’s a great place. I just didn’t do it.

K: Yeah, my grandparents went to Lipscomb so they didn’t go to Harding either. It’s not really a family school for me either. I just wanted to come anyway. Alright, well, thank you for meeting with me and letting me record you.