

## **Mr. Donald Bruce Glyn Poole**

### **Retired Vocational Rehabilitation Professional for the State of Arkansas**

*Interview conducted by*

*Matthew Davis*

*In 2018 in Denton, Texas*

Disability Studies Minor

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#### **Biography**

Donald Bruce Glyn Poole was born in 1933 in Brownsville, Arkansas. He graduated from the Arkansas State Teacher's College in 1955 with a degree in Education where he majored in Industrial Arts and minored in Art.

In 1965 he was involved in a car accident which resulted in the loss of his sight and affected his short-term memory. Because of this incident he was enrolled in an institution called the Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind. This institution was responsible for very basic transitional skills for people who had recently lost their sight.

After completion of this program he was approached by a counselor to work as part of a new program through the Arkansas School for the Blind to provide vocational rehabilitation services. There, he developed a battery of tests that were used to determine what assistance each individual student would require to find gainful employment. He worked in programs with the state of Arkansas, often through grants provided by the federal government, to provide vocational rehabilitation services, not only for the blind, but for those with other and multiple disabilities, until his retirement in 1993.

#### **Topics discussed**

- Personal background
- Loss of vision and short-term memory issues
- Attendance at the Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind
- Work with the Arkansas School for the Blind
- Work with the Rehabilitation Initial Diagnosis and Assessment for Clients (RIDAC) program

**Davis**

This is Matthew Davis interviewing Glyn Poole, with his daughter Nancilou Jones and granddaughter Ashley Jones for the Texas Disability History Collection.

Glyn?

**Poole**

Yes.

**Davis**

How are you doing?

**Poole**

Well, at the moment I'm kind of old and decrepit, but I'm ok. [laughter] I'm nervous as heck.

**Davis**

<topic>Personal background</topic>

That's OK. I am too. [laughter]

Can you tell us a little bit about yourself, where you're from?  
When you were born, stuff like that?

**Poole**

I was born in Arkansas at Brownsville. Brownsville is in kind of East Central Arkansas. Brownsville happens to be the town which part of the civil war stuff—History was in and I find that very, but anyway, uh, I was born in Brownsville, Arkansas in 1932.

**Nancilou**

Three.

**Poole**

Huh?

**Nancilou**

Three.

**Poole**

Thirty-three, 1933. And uh, I had a, a sister that was older than me by 10 years and there was a child between us that died at birth and so it was just the two children. And uh, my, uh, my father's name was Gus Poole and my mother's name was Alice. She was a Bursar and uh, her family's farm was right next to the one my daddy had so they grew up with, uh, [lightly pounds on table] no one ever buying everything. So, uh...

**Nancilou**

That's good. [laughter]

**Poole**

Anyway. [laughter] I do [clears throat] Do I, do I, do you need to know anything about the family?

**Davis**

Not especially, it's going to be just about you.

**Poole**

Okay, well, as I said, I was the third child, my sister was 10 years older than I and we were born in, I was born in Brownsville, Arkansas in nineteen hundred and thirty—

**Nancilou**

Three. Three.

**Poole**

Three. And...

**Nancilou**

Why don't you tell about where you went to college. Skip to college.

**Poole**

Go to college?

**Nancilou**

Mhmm.

### **Poole**

My father had moved us to Conway, Arkansas and kind of we, had a couple of colleges there, Hendrix University and University of Central Arkansas. At that time, it was called Arkansas State Teacher's College and we moved there when I was just finishing up, had just finished the 11th grade. So, I went one year there and after graduation from Conway High School, I enrolled at Arkansas State Teacher's College and got a degree in Education and uh, majored in Industrial Arts and minored in Art. And when I finished, I got a job teaching at a—

### **Nancilou**

I forgot the name.

### **Poole**

—public, public school system in Little Rock and I taught there, actually I became available for teaching at mid-term of that school year, so I finished out that year in a situation where the man had, had some health problems and had to give up teaching and I took his place and finished the year, and they sign me to a contract to teach at Little Rock and I taught one year. I taught Industrial Arts at Pulaski Heights Junior High School for the one year. At the end of that year, I—in Arkansas they paid you for nine months and at the end of the nine months, uh, you were kind of on your own. And so, uh, I wasn't real happy with the arrangement [laughter] that school system had, but I got a summer job and that summer job was working for an engineer in Little Rock and his primary things at that time was building schools.

So, I was in a design situation there and at the end of that summer, uh, it, uh, I was prepared to go back to teaching and teach at Pulaski Heights Junior High School. And so, when, when came time for school to start, a Mr. Blaylock the engineer said, "Poole, you did a good job for us this summer any chance of getting you to come to work for regular?" And I said, "No, I don't think so." I said, "I got my degree in education [laughter] and I'm going to teach." And then I said, "How much would you pay me?" [laughter] And he told me, and it was a considerable more [laughter] than I was going to make as a school teacher. And I said, "Well, you know, if I could get out of this contract I got, I'd love to have the job." And I went to the man at the school board, and I was very fortunate cause the guy at the school board had known my brother-in-law in Northwest Arkansas years and years before. So, when I went in to talk to him, he recognized who I was, and I said, "I'm wantin' to get out of my contract." And he said, "What?" I said, "I want to get out of my contract." And he said, "What for?" And I said, "Cause I've got a chance for another job that's going to make about 50 percent more than I can make teaching school." And he said, "OK Poole, I'll get you out of the contract, go ahead and do it." And I did. And that's how I got into mechanical engineering after being educated to be a teacher.

And I worked for Mr. Blaylock for about four or five years. And then, uh, there was a guy who sold mechanical equipment called on us regular, and he came in one day and we went for coffee and he said to me, "Poole, are you by any chance interested in doing something a little different?" And I said, "What'd ya have in mind?" And he said, "I sure need somebody with your background to help me." Arkansas had a lot of construction going on. And he said, "I need somebody that's familiar with what the specification things are." And he said, "I sure could use you." And I said, "Oh, I don't think so." I said, "I went to school all that time to do what I'm doing, [laughter] I think I'll just go ahead and do that." And

he said I said, "But how much would you pay me?" [laughter] And he told me, and I said, "You know I believe I might like to do what you're talking about." [laughter]

At that time, I quit the teaching business and I went to work for consulting engineer doing mechanical design for architects, and those days the architects in Arkansas, most of the architects didn't have their own mechanical engineering department within it. And, and they would sub this out to, uh, the several firms in the Little Rock area who did the mechanical and electrical design. And I worked for them for, for a, I don't know, four or five years. And one day one of the engineers that called on us, I mean, one of the salespeople who called on us up to encourage us to use their kind of equipment and things, ah, came in and he said, "Poole, I need to, I need to talk to ya." He said, "I'm, I'm getting busy, I'm getting swamped under." And he said, "You seem to understand this stuff pretty good. What's the chance of your coming to work for me?" And I said, "Oh no." I said, "I went to school all that time to learn to do what I'm doing right now and so, I need to stick with that."

**Nancilou**

[whispered] I think we're repeating.

**Ashley**

Mhmm.

**Poole**

And I said, "But let's talk about the arrangement." And whenever he did, I said, "You know, I believe maybe I'd like to do that."

**Nancilou**

Was that Goodman?

**Poole**

Huh?

**Nancilou**

Was that Goodman?

**Poole**

Bill Goodman.

**Nancilou**

Okay.

**Poole**

No, no, no, no, not Goodman yet. He got me out of that job, but it was, it was Donald Blaylock.

**Nancilou**

Who were you with first?

**Poole**

I went to work for Don Blaylock and he had a firm that did mechanical, electrical—

**Nancilou**

Okay.

**Poole**

—engineering and my job primarily was drafting and drawing the prints and things. And I worked in the Mechanical Department there and I was with them for about seeming like it's about three years and there was a guy who sold fancy equipment stuff and he bid on the plans that we put out.

**Nancilou**

Right. And who was that?

**Poole**

He came, and that was, that was, uh, Alan Bullard.

**Nancilou**

Oh, that's right, Bullard. Okay.

**Poole**

And so, Alan Bullard was the salespeople who represented—

**Nancilou**

That's right.

**Poole**

—several of these countries—

**Nancilou**

Counties.

**Poole**

[lightly pounding table] —in Arkansas and he kept calling and he always come around by my side over there. One day he said, "Poole, would you consider changing jobs?" And I said, "No, I don't think so. I'm pretty happy where I am. How much would you pay me?" [laughter]

**Nancilou**

[laughing] I see a theme.

**Poole**

And once again it was considerably better and so I went to work for Bullard and he represented several companies, uh, Chicago Pump and well there's several of those big companies and they move, some were up east, but whenever the plans, the blueprints came out, then I'd go over and [lightly pounding table] read the blueprints as they put them out and I'd find any equipment that had been specified, that my company that I was with then would furnish, and I worked up a [lightly pounding table] quotes on that equipment and gave it to the contractors. And, whoever was successful and got the contract, they had to buy all the equipment, but they can select as long as the engineers approved the one they were quoting on.

So, I went to work for Bullard and I worked for him for about three years and we kept calling on one of the architectural firms and I'd go in there and I'd have to go over to their place in order to get the blueprints and look and go through them. So, I'd go in over there and I'd get the prints for them, whatever they were, they were putting out and we were building Hilburton. And Washington made some federal money available to build small hospitals in rural areas, small town hospital, and they started building them in Arkansas as thick as they could be. And so, uh, that turned out to be pretty much what we were focused on.

But, Bullard offered me a job and what I do is I take the plans for whatever we were bidding on, I would go into the specifications and the plans and find the equipment of the type that we were selling. And I get all the information about it and I put together a quote on it for that equipment and I give it to the several contractors that were bidding on the job and they'd use it to make up their approach for the job. And I did that. So, I got acquainted with a lot of the engineers in the Central Arkansas area that were, most of them were, there wasn't too many of them out in the state at that time. And I got acquainted with a lot of them and, uh... [lightly pounding on table]

**Nancilou**

Goodman.

**Poole**

One day, all this stuff just kind of fell into place. But one day, while I was going around another architectural firm in town and we'd have to go to them to look at the plans and get the information. And when I went in there and while I was in there, the guy that was in charge of the Mechanical Engineering Department at that architectural firm came by where I was working on the plans and he said, "Poole, uh—"

**Nancilou**

Is this Goodman?

**Poole**

"—any chance..."

**Nancilou**

This Goodman?

**Poole**

Yeah. And he said, "I could, sure could use somebody that had your background." And I said, "Okay." I said, "I don't know." I said, "I'm pretty satisfied where I am." And he said, "Well, you'll be on a commission basis." And he said, right then as I said, we were building little hospitals in the state of Arkansas like crazy. And we were also building schools like crazy. And so, I said, "Well, it sounds like a pretty good opportunity." So, I left the design thing and I went to work in the sales for Alan Bullard."

**Nancilou**

No.

**Poole**

And uh, Bullard represented several large companies, Chicago...

**Nancilou**

You've circled around. So, go on with when you went to Goodman.

**Poole**

Okay, it actually was Bill Goodman. And...

**Nancilou**

And what were you doing at Bill Goodman's?

**Poole**

Well I was doing a design stuff. I was back to mechanical design, I was on the drafting table all the time. And, uh...

**Nancilou**

With air conditioning systems and stuff?

**Poole**

Huh?

**Nancilou**

Weren't you doing air conditioning systems? And...

**Poole**

Well, yeah, that part of the mechanical stuff.

**Nancilou**

Yeah, yeah.

**Poole**

But we, in those days, the architects usually took the whole contract and then they pick a mechanical engineer to do the mechanical, the plumbing and the heating and the air conditioning. And then they found that there was other engineering firms and they did the electrical stuff and they'd pick one of them. And I was working in the mechanical stuff and [phone rings] I did that for, oh, I guess three years or something [phone rings] like that.

**Nancilou**

Is that when you started getting interested in the Volkswagen Campers and all? Cause we need to get to the wreck.

**Poole**

Do what now?

**Nancilou**

Isn't that where you started with the Volkswagen camper?

**Poole**

[laughing] Oh, well, that was another interesting happening situation...

**Nancilou**

And that's what we want. We want about that.

**Poole**

Huh?

**Nancilou**

We want about that, tell about the camper and what happened.

**Poole**

Well, okay, well were by that time Rosemary was also teaching and she needed a car to go back and forth and, and I needed one to go with. And so, we went looking for a second car. And I found a Volkswagen bus. [door closes] By that I mean it was, it looked like a box that had the square front and a square back and the sides were straight. And, I bought that bus to drive back and forth because I got a good price on it. But then I realized that I needed to... Life was just working and that. So, I decided to build a camper.

I saw one that had been built in a bus just like the bus I had and so I snuck in there when I could and I kind of got all the ideas from it and I bought paneling and that kind of stuff and I enclosed the inside of that bus. And boy, it was pretty darn nice, and it had a double seat thing in the back. That was not the original. I took all the original stuff out of the back and this seat that was in the back, was one of mine design in it. But anyway, that seat lifted up, tipped over and rested down at the back of the front seats and, and, and then uh, the back of that back seat, which was, I had made and put it in there, that laid down and when we did, we had a place in the back of that bus about seven foot long and so we could sleep back there. And my daughter was very young at the time and I, I made a sling. It went from the driver's door side to the passenger side and it was a canvas thing—

**Nancilou**

It was a hammock.

**Poole**

—and she could sleep in that so we could, so I could put that across above the front, two front seats and we put a bed in there for her so she could get in that and then Rosemary and I would fold down the back of this thing and it made a bed in the back and we could sleep back there, because these little buses weren't very big. And anyway, that turned out to be a lot of fun and so I was driving it to church—

**Nancilou**

No.

**Poole**

—because I couldn't afford—

**Nancilou**

To work.

**Poole**

—have a bus and park it. And so, I drove it to work. I didn't need a car to ride around, I just drive it to work and drive it home, drive it to work and drive it home. But I went to church on Wednesday night and so I drove it into the parking lot at the church and my friend of mine there said, "Hey man, I like that." And he, [Nancilou whispers] he decided he wanted to have one too. So, he found the Volkswagen, a used one and he built one and it, it was like what I had. And so, our family, uh, my wife Rosemary and, and our daughter Nancilou, uh, used our bus and this other couple had a son about little older I think than Nancilou was. And so, we, we did camping together, and we parked the two buses side-by-side with the, that one door that opened on the back of the bus.

**Nancilou**

Side of the bus.

**Poole**

Huh?

**Nancilou**

It was the one on the side of the bus.

**Poole**

Yeah, one on the side of the bus. And we parked bus going one way and the other bus going the other way so that one door on the side match up so and, and, and we made a, a canvas—

**Nancilou**

Awning.

**Poole**

—awning that went out on the side of that and I had a metal frame that I flipped over and put braces down to the, to the bumper in the front and the back to support it and we had a nice covered place out there in we could, uh...

**Nancilou**

We could sit and eat and stuff.

**Poole**

We could be under that to eat and do all that kind of stuff. But anyway.

**Nancilou**

You want to tell about when you went to the lumber yard.

**Poole**

But that was a lot of fun. But I couldn't afford to have that camper and just park it in the back of the house and I just had to find some way to justify it. But I just worked during the day. But I worked an awful lot at night. But I, I just, I'd, I take that bus and drive it to downtown Little Rock where our office was. And I parked it. I worked at that engineering firm during the day and sometimes I'd stay and work late at night. Then I'd just drive the bus back home and then tomorrow I'd usually just to go to work and we didn't make any difference, it had all that camping stuff in it and it turned out to be a real, real lot of fun a friend of mine at the Church said that's—

**Nancilou**

Yeah, you told us.

**Poole**

—and that's a good idea and so he built one and so we started doing a lot of camping in Arkansas and that was a great asset for...

**Nancilou**

Now, tell about going to the lumberyard.

**Poole**

<topic> Loss of vision and short-term memory issues</topic>

But, I didn't, as I said, I couldn't have that bus and just park, so I drove back and forth to work every day and so I was coming in from work one night, afternoon, and it was about 5:30 and I was working on a project at home and Long Bell Lumber Company was on the way home and so I could go by Long Bell and buy two or three, four pieces of whatever I needed to finish my project at home and I pulled in Long Bell Lumber Company and, and get my stuff. But I was coming out of Long Bell Lumber Company and I was coming, I was going to cross two lanes of traffic and turn left into the inside lane. And I, I came out of Long Bell, I crossed the two lanes and then there was a car in, there was two cars in the outside lane going to the, to my left and so I was going to get into that inside lane. But these two cars were going along in the outside lane and just so happened about the time I pulled up and moved out into the traffic, going to left on the inside lane where I turned left in there. The guy that was second, the car that was second in the outside lane, decided to change lanes. And he changed lanes, and his back bumper caught the right bumper on my—

**Nancilou**

The front.

**Poole**

—right front bumper on my car and it buckled and it swung my car around to the right and when he did the left door came open and when that door came open, I went out, and I guess I, we don't know whether I hit my head on the top of the car door as I went out or whether I hit it on the concrete after I came out and hit the ground. And they...

**Nancilou**

[whispers] Can we take a break?

**Poole**

But anyway, I wound up in the hospital. I think I spent four weeks in the hospital and the results of that was that.

**Nancilou**

Okay, we're going to pause for a minute, okay?

*Pause in recording*

**Davis**

Okay, Glyn can you continue talking about your accident?

**Poole**

Well, uh...

**Nancilou**

Okay, so you just had the accident and fallen out of the truck.

**Poole**

Oh yeah! Yeah and anyway, I spent a month at a Baptist Hospital in Little Rock and at the end of that month...

**Nancilou**

Well tell him what, what your injury was.

**Poole**

Well, I got a lick on the head [laughter] and I guess, I used to tell people that when I went out of the bus, I wanted to hit on to something that was pretty substantial so I landed on my head and, I guess I, got a concussion and, uh, there was some internal bleeding inside my head they said that the blood begin to accumulate so much in there that was putting pressure on the brain. And so, they said, "We got to get all that outta there." And so, they drilled a hole on the side of my head and they went in and they took all that excess blood out and they said, "Now, he should be okay now," and, and everything looked like was going to be.

The only trouble was when I started coming around I couldn't see. And I was unfortunately, I was totally blind and the only people that I could recognize was my wife, Rosemary and my daughter Nancilou. And whenever they said that I was just almost non-responsive in the bed. But whenever my wife and daughter came in the room and I heard their voices, they said I became responsive. And that was when they started saying, well, we think he's going to, [lightly pounding on table] you know, when they did all this blood out there and everything. Well the trouble was when I finally got out after a month in the hospital, I, they realized that I couldn't see. Well, I [Nancilou and Ashley whisper] went home...

**Nancilou**

And this was when?

**Poole**

In nineteen sixty—seven.

**Nancilou**

Five.

**Poole**

Five! The accident was in sixty-five.

**Nancilou**

Yeah.

**Poole**

And so, but anyway, I went home and [takes a drink] but I, um...

**Nancilou**

You went home and you, your, your vision was not good and...

**Poole**

<topic> Attendance at the Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind</topic>

Oh, well at that time I was totally blind and so when I said that I couldn't work or making a living like that, but there was a place in Little Rock called Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind. And it was a rehab center. And I knew about it and I said to Rosemary, I said, "Do you think I could get in out there and get some help?" And she said, "Well, we'll find out." So, she called them. They said, "Yeah, bring him out here." So, I spent four months at the Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind.

**Nancilou**

Were they connected with the Lions Club?

**Poole**

Well, yeah. What happened, the Lions Club is a social group and, and they sponsored a lot of stuff and blindness was one of the things that the Lions Club was interested in. And so, they did a whole lot of stuff for the, uh, uh, Enterprises for the Blind. This Enterprises for the Blind there was a fellow who had gone to University of Arkansas and, he had a visual problem. And when he got to be rather influential and then when he got out he got ahold of some federal money and built, bought a block of land in Little

Rock and built the Enterprises for the Blind and it was a institution where people could, come and it was, it wasn't, It wasn't funded like from the federal government, but most of the money came from the federal government. And I went out to the Enterprises for the Blind and they taught me how to travel with the white cane, and how to get in and out of traffic and, and do all kinds of that kind of – Oh! They also taught me how to make coffee and doing' real important things like that. [laughter] But anyway, I went there for four months and when I got through, they said, "Well good, Mr. Poole, you did a good job! We're real proud of you and you're dismissed now. And I went home and sit down—

**Nancilou**

Is that where you learned braille?

**Poole**

—and it looked like that was going to be the future because I didn't know anything else, so there wasn't any other opportunities—

**Nancilou**

Right.

**Poole**

—and I just went home and sit down. And, it was a really a discouraging time. And uh, let me see. I need to collect my, wits, I got one of them I don't know where the other one is.

**Nancilou**

I know, yeah, we'll find the other one in a minute. Well, you haven't mentioned other than your vision, what other injury did you have? What other affect from your accident was there?

**Poole**

Well [chuckles] uh, I couldn't walk very good.

**Nancilou**

Well, I'm thinking more about your memory.

**Poole**

What? [laughter] now, I, well—

**Nancilou**

You had some short term...

**Poole**

—well it was [lightly pounding table] what had put me in there was a head injury and as a result of that head injury I could only, I didn't know anything or anybody. And when I was in the hospital they said I was almost non-responsive, but they said every time my wife and my daughter came in the room and I heard their voices, they said I stuck, became very animated and, and, and responsive to stuff. But then when they were gone, and it got quiet in there, they said that for the nurses and stuff like that I'd just pretty much non-responsive. But when Rosemary and Nancilou came back into the room and I heard their voices, they said I became quite animated. But I spent a month at the Baptist hospital and when I got through, I went home.

**Nancilou**

Yeah, but you also had some short-term memory loss.

**Poole**

Uh...

**Nancilou**

You could remember, once you got home and you started healing...

**Poole**

Well, no, when I got home, as I said, the only people I could really recognize was my wife Rosemary and my daughter Nancilou and they said in the hospital—

**Nancilou**

Right.

**Poole**

When they came into the room I really got animated, but I went home, and I guess gradually began to kind of pick up stuff. And, I spent a year and a half, at home, recuperating, and trying to get, where I could do some stuff. And, that's when they told me about the Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind.

**Nancilou**

Right. And you went to that.

**Poole**

<topic> Work with the Arkansas School for the Blind</topic>

I went out there for four weeks and they got through they had taught me how to travel with a white cane. They taught me real important things like making coffee, and they taught me how to make a sandwich and that kind of real important stuff. And I got through after the four months and the money run out, they said, "Okay, Mr. Poole, you did a good job here, you're through now." And all I had to, could do was go home and went home and I spent I think four weeks or so or at home. And then they got a federal grant at the Arkansas School for the Blind. And I...

**Nancilou**

Did you find out about that from the guy at church?

**Poole**

Huh?

**Nancilou**

Who worked for rehab? You know, you had that guy that worked for Rehab. I can't think of...

**Poole**

Yeah, yeah, uh, but anyway, I found out about this thing and I went to him and I said, "You think I could get some of that service?" And they said, "I don't know, can ya see?" And I said, "No." And they said, "Well, we think you're qualified." [laughter]

But, anyway, I went to work, I went through that program and at the completion of that, like I said a while ago, you went home and just sit down and they didn't do anything else. But then one day there was a counselor came into my house and he said, "Poole. Weren't you a degree in education?" I said, "Yeah." Said, "Didn't you teach at one time?" I said, "Yeah." And they said, "Well, we, we got a little project out at the Arkansas School for the Blind and we think maybe you could be a participant in it and help." And I said, "Okay." So, I went to work, and they hired me for reha—Arkansas Rehab Services for the Blind, was a public agency, state agency, and they hired me. And they put me out at the School for the Blind and they said, "Okay, now what we want you to do is we want you to, uh, see what you can do about finding out things that we could do as a rehab agency to help out here?" And I said, "Okay." And they said, "You need to find out about the kid." And so, I didn't know what to do, but anyway, they said, "Well, you write up a program and we'll see about it." So, I wrote down what I was wanted to do, and it turned out that I spent four years, no six years...

**Nancilou**

I think it was more like six years, yeah.

**Poole**

Six years at the School for the Blind.

**Nancilou**

Tell about your program.

**Poole**

And what it started out as, I was going to work with these kids to find out what we thought they could do. I could tell our rehab counselors, that weren't part of the school, but these kids get out of school, and they, they'd send them back up into the hinterlands of Arkansas [laughter] and that's where they'd be forever. And they said, "We need to have some kind of a plan worked up so these kids, when they do leave school, we got something we can start working with." And so, I set up a testing program out at the School for the Blind and it was primarily aimed at, finding out their ability to deal with stuff around them, uh, and I had, developed a battery of tests, and I worked with the kids for one period a day. And they, the school would recommend the ones, and the ones they sent to me were the ones that the school said, "Well, this kid's not going to..."

**Nancilou**

Probably not going on to higher education.

**Poole**

Well, yeah. They had a group of kids that were not really educationally able to handle a situation and they said, "We need to have some kind of a plan developed so that when the school gets through with them, we don't send them back up into the hinterlands of Arkansas, and let them live out there on some farm from now [coughs] until they die."

**Nancilou**

So [Poole coughs] it was looking at a vocational plan.

**Poole**

Yeah, work out a vocational plan. Some kind of, said, gave some kind of a goal for the kids to work towards, so they could develop some independence. And, I stayed out there for—

**Nancilou**

Six years?

**Poole**

—eight years.

**Nancilou**

Eight years, okay.

**Poole**

<topic> Work with the Rehabilitation Initial Diagnosis and Assessment for Clients (RIDAC) program</topic>

Stayed out there for eight years at the School for the Blind. And, I—read in a—in a, uh, some information that came out from the state of Arkansas. And they were talking about doing something and, what was the general agency, not this Blind. And it sounded a whole lot like what I had. And so, I got to checking and there's a fella I had gone to college with there in that department, so I called him up and I said, "Listen, tell me about this thing in that, in that bulletin that came out." And he said, "Okay." So, he started telling me and I thought, well man, that sounds like what I'm doing out here now. And so, he said, "Well, come down here and we'll have..." And so, he picked me up, took me down to the place down there and we went in. And when they started talking about what they was going to do, it sounded somewhat like what I did. But the difference was, it was going to be just short-term stuff. And maybe for, in some cases one day or maybe three days or to most of week. And we worked with these individuals, so the general agency was what really got us started. And as a result, this, uh, this project was... What was that called?

**Nancilou**

RIDAC.

**Poole**

RIDAC. And it stood for Rehabilitation, Initial Diagnosis and Assessment for Clients. And the idea was we were going to use standardized testing and that kind of stuff. And we were going to get as much information about this person as we can, and put it into, summarize it into a, uh, information that the counselors could use then to write a plan, a rehabilitation for that person.

**Nancilou**

Now, describe kind of what the clients, how did they become eligible?

**Poole**

Uh, they were just referred to, like anybody else, but how they became eligible for our thing was their counselor.

**Nancilou**

Because, how did they come up with one of the counselors? How did they get, what were you evaluating them?

**Poole**

Their potential for specialized vocational training.

**Nancilou**

After, they had had a...

**Poole**

Well, yeah, and we and that included preparing whatever we thought they could get through to give them a vocational plan.

**Nancilou**

But these were people with disabilities is what I'm getting at.

**Poole**

Oh yeah. Well everybody in this thing was disabled, but they were, now it wasn't—

**Nancilou**

But your clients were...

**Poole**

—now, now then we're working with what we called the general agency, which covered all handicap groups with the exception of the blind and the deaf, they had two separate programs and I had been in the blind situation and now I was working in general agency.

**Nancilou**

And you were working more with adults.

**Poole**

And we we're working almost totally with adults. And what had happened, we had counselors all over the state of Arkansas and somebody'd wander in and say, you know, I can't do anything anymore, my back is, my, you know, or they been hurt somehow or other. And the counselor said, "Huh, I don't know what I can do with this guy, I don't remember what he knows and what he doesn't know." So that's what this Rehabilitation Initial Diagnosis and Assessment for Clients came about. And what we did, we use standardized testing and we use observational interviews and, and, uh, work with a client and try to just develop some kind of an idea of what we thought this client might be able to go do. [cough] So, that

project turned out to be really good and it only served the central Arkansas area, but they said all the counselors out in the state said, "Boy, y'all people down in Little Rock get everything." And they said, "We don't ever get anything out here." So, they said, "Okay." They said streamline what you're doing to the point that it can be done all over the state. Well, we didn't have the kind of money to have the kind of number of personnel we had, but we streamlined it a little bit and we started depending on, um, the federal government had the test...Oh, can I not remember that? But anyway—

**Nancilou**

I don't know.

**Poole**

—it was a standardized test that had been around for a long time. And so, we streamlined it a little bit and put it into our program and we used [phone rings] that to develop most of the information about the person's mechanical, electrical and physical abilities. And it worked out real good. And it wasn't long until the counselors and the rest of the state said, "Boy, y'all get everything down there in Little Rock." So, we started expanding and we went state wide. And we set up programs just like the one we had in Little Rock, all over the state. And we usually have like, one program like this would cover maybe the counselors in about three or four states—

**Nancilou**

Counties.

**Poole**

—I mean three or four counties and so that, that gave everybody in the state some of the kind of information we've been getting in Little Rock. And that turned out to make everybody genuinely happy [laughter], all these counselors in the state, all thought they had, you know, everything was wonderful. And so, that, that continued. Uh, well, actually the program continued, is still going today I guess, because they have to have some way to gather that kind of information.

**Nancilou**

When did you go down there? When did you switch from the school to, do you remember what year it was?

**Poole**

I was out at the school eight years and I went to work out there in sixty-seven. So, what would that be? You have to do the math [laughter], I'm over 60 years old.

**Nancilou**

Uh, yeah. [laughter] Seventy-five?

**Poole**

Yeah, but anyway that, that, that turned out to be a very, very—

**Nancilou**

And you worked with them...

**Poole**

—and was exciting because I could see the results. And that program of course expanded and changed a great deal, but it still exists pretty much like what we finally expanded to in the state. But my gosh that was in nineteen hundred...

**Nancilou**

Well you went in 1975, I did the math. And you retired and, you retired from there. Do you remember what year you retired?

**Poole**

From?

**Nancilou**

I'm going to have to do math again.

**Poole**

Was that after I went to work at the general agency?

**Nancilou**

Yeah. You went in seventy-five worked in the general agency and you retired from there.

**Poole**

Yeah. Yeah. And that was. Well I was, was—

**Nancilou**

Were you sixty...

**Poole**

—sixty, I was seventy years old.

**Nancilou**

No, you weren't.

**Poole**

Yes, I was. Well wait a minute now. [laughter]

**Nancilou**

Because retirement age is technically sixty-five, but didn't you get an early incentive?

**Poole**

Oh yeah, [laughing] that's right! Sixty-five was when, but I could get early retirement because I was blind [laughter] and old and...

**Nancilou**

See, weren't you like sixty, were you sixty...?

**Poole**

Oh, I was just barely sixty.

**Nancilou**

Were you? Okay. So that was in...

**Poole**

So, I retired in 1960 which was...

**Nancilou**

No, you were 60 years old.

**Poole**

Yeah, I was 60 years old and I retired...

**Nancilou**

Thirty-three and sixty is ninety-three. 1993, does that sound right?

**Poole**

Yeah, I think that's about right. Ninety or ninety-three, something like that. Anyway...

**Nancilou**

Well, Matt needs some, you know, he needs, he needs dates. [laughter]

**Poole**

So, well now let's see now that was when I retired. And...

**Nancilou**

You were talking about how the program had spread out to the whole state.

**Poole**

Oh yeah!

**Nancilou**

But you stayed mostly in Little Rock, right?

**Poole**

Well, originally it just in about five counties in the middle part of the state for, that's when it was more of a research project, but then it went state wide and it's been streamlined, and I doubt if I'd recognize anything about it now. But anyway, that was the beginning of it and I always felt like that if we hadn't gone the route we he had in Little Rock with the things we were doing there, that they'd still be doing it kind of like they used to. [laughter] But anyway, so that worked out good and I felt real positive about that.

**Nancilou**

And, you worked primarily in the Little Rock office, but you did go to Hot Springs.

**Poole**

Well, yeah, I...

**Nancilou**

There for a while, one day a week?

**Poole**

Hot Springs had a pretty high number of people that was in there for the thing and that got kind of huffy over at Hot Springs because they said, "Y'all get everything." So, they said, "Okay, well we'll send part of this staff over there one day a week."

**Nancilou**

Yeah.

**Poole**

So, we went over there one day a week and did basically the same thing we did in Little Rock.

**Nancilou**

And that was about what, how far is it to Hot Springs?

**Poole**

Oh, thirty miles. And uh, that, that turned out to be, they were really happy over there and it turned out to be a really good thing. And if I do say so myself, that little old thing that I started with at the School for the Blind blossomed into—

**Nancilou**

Quite a career.

**Poole**

—a career. Yeah. And uh, I retired at age...

**Nancilou**

You said sixty, I think that's right.

**Poole**

Yeah, I think it was.

**Nancilou**

It was either sixty or sixty-two. So, you retired in either ninety-three or ninety-five. I don't remember which, but you were with them...

**Poole**

I'm not ninety-three.

**Nancilou**

1993.

**Poole**

Oh, 1993, yeah. And, now what I?

**Nancilou**

I don't know, do you need anything else?

**Davis**

Well is there anything else you'd [Poole] like to share?

**Poole**

Yeah, I would.

**Davis**

About your time teaching at the school, or just your own...

**Poole**

Ok. Well, let, let me, let me tell you this. At the Arkansas School for the Blind, they had two programs. They had the regular academic program and the kids came and they went for the 12 years and they would graduate and go on to regular life, like any other kid. But they also had a program out there. They

called the exceptional unit. And we had multiple handicapped kids that were in the exceptional unit. Most of them were... Well, retardation was one of the major ones. They just were slow learners and they were good kids and, but they had some visual problem which included them in our program. But then we had—

### **Nancilou**

They had other disabilities.

### **Poole**

—they also had multiple handicaps. And uh, that's when Mr. Wooley, who was president, head of the School for the Blind and had been forever—they got a grant to work with the deaf and the blind and the School for the Blind got the job and so they took, they took three students that they started with that were both deaf and blind. Now and in some cases, they might have a little bit more vision, like maybe they could, you know, find the door with the light was outside and that kind of stuff. And they started this special program. And so, while I was at the School for the Blind, they asked me to start working with these kids. And let me tell you something, if you want to try to teach an activity to a totally blind, deaf child—uh, it's, it's pretty difficult. But that program also turned out to be a good one, not because of me but because of the program. And as a result, uh, that turned into a major thing, and what we found out that in the state of Arkansas at the time, there were several children that would qualify as deaf and blind and they lived in the hills of Northwest Arkansas, in the cotton fields of Eastern Arkansas, which is, and these kids started getting services and it was the most gratifying thing to watch these kids start to develop. [Laughing]

They asked me to bring one of the deaf, blind and the deaf, blind, that person that worked with him to a rehab meeting and tell the rehab counselors about all the stuff we was doing with them. And we did. And this kid, they all had pretty good sense of smell [laughter] and they had just enough vision to find their way between obstacles. But, we were sitting in there, this meeting and the child was sitting over here and they sit him down there, he sat there real patient and all of a sudden he got up and made his way across the floor, oh I don't know, five or six feet, bent down to the table and then picked up something off of the table and just got him a swig. But, he'd smelled some coffee, [laughter] cup of hot coffee over there, and he went over and got him a drink out of it and so, far as I was concerned that was a good part of the assessment we had.

### **Nancilou**

That's right.

### **Poole**

He, he dealt with the environment that he was in at the moment and got himself a drink of coffee and I, I thought, well, you know, I can't say I blame you. Well, I don't know, I'd had some of that coffee and it smelled better, but anyway. Anyhow, [coughs] I'm sorry. Anyway, what—my train of thought is off the track [laughter].

### **Davis**

Glyn, do you remember anything specific about the program that you developed while you working out there?

**Poole**

Well, we were...

**Nancilou**

Tell him some of the tasks you came up with.

**Poole**

Some of the...

**Nancilou**

The tasks.

**Poole**

Well. They said, can this kid physically, you know, is he physically able to perform? And I said, "I don't know." And they said, "Well find out." So, I got some tests. Well, I made up some tests, but I came up with the thing that put these deaf kids, I mean these blind kids in a situation where, well what it was...

**Nancilou**

Remember you used, you went back to your industrial arts and used screws and nuts.

**Poole**

Yeah, but anyway, I had a panel where these kids would have to set out, stand up and work with their hands, but there were some plastic panels that were held by some screws up on this thing. There were three shapes, there was a triangle and there was a circle and there was a kind of a—

**Nancilou**

Square.

**Poole**

—square like thing I guess, but anyway. And they'd stand up and they'd have to take off five nuts to take that thing off of that panel, and then they would reach up overhead and they put it on to the bolts that were sticking out up there and they put the nuts back on it. And they'd move all three of those panels,

plastic panels from the one that are directly in front of them as they stood up and put them on the one that was up above their head, horizontal. And I would time that. And of course, most of it was, was observation was what the thing was for, but you can't really write observations down too good, so we timed all of it and used that to develop a score. But anyway, and then they take it off of the one overhead and they'd bend down, and they'd put it on one just about table height and they mount them on that one. And then, uh, and I'd time that and then after they did that they'd take off of it and they'd have to bend over and reach back under an overhanging part and put it back on the place, ones down there. And that really turned out to be a chore for most of them because a lot of these kids that were blind, they, they didn't want to do a lot of bending and getting under and that kind of stuff. But anyway, that was typical of the kind of test that we had there.

**Nancilou**

You had them do some sorting stuff too didn't you?

**Poole**

Huh?

**Nancilou**

Didn't you have them sort stuff?

**Poole**

Oh, yeah, well we did a lot of tacticals...

**Nancilou**

Tactile?

**Poole**

...touches, yeah.

**Nancilou**

Touching stuff.

**Poole**

A they uh, but having some of these, especially for when I started working with the deaf and the blind, we started getting into things like, they—they didn't like to touch things. They were, they were very, hesitant about putting her hands out and in places and stuff. So, we spend a lot of time trying to help

them become more accustomed to making, doing that kind of thing. But uh, that, that turned out to be real good. And then our...

**Nancilou**

When you were down at RIDAC what kind of...

**Poole**

Well that was at RIDAC Rehabilitation.

**Nancilou**

I thought that was at the school.

**Poole**

Well, yeah but see that's what RIDAC was. They—[laughs]

**Nancilou**

But did you have the same...

**Poole**

—federal government, they like to have these little lanes and things and so...

**Nancilou**

Right, but where you had the kids moving the stuff, that was at the School for the Blind.

**Poole**

Yeah.

**Nancilou**

Okay, what type of...

**Poole**

Well, then they said, all the rehab counselors said...

**Nancilou**

I know. So, when you got to RIDAC what kind of assessments did you do?

**Poole**

Well that's what I said, and they said we don't ever give them anything and so we said, "Okay." And they said, "Well, get us that kind of information."

**Nancilou**

So, you did similar things there.

**Poole**

And so, we, we, we had a battery of tests that had these individuals and they would, well one of the tests was they would do some things standing up, reaching straight ahead. And they take some panels off the wall.

**Nancilou**

Yeah, you told about how to do those.

**Poole**

Yeah. And they take those screws off and then they had to take these, well there was I think a square, a circle and a triangle. And they had to find out where they go above, above their head and they were bolts sticking down that these matched and they had to find a place to get them on there and then they put the screws up there. So, they were working with her hands straight out and then their hands straight up.

**Nancilou**

And then down.

**Poole**

And then they would take it off overhead and put it down like they would work in, kind of like table height. And then they took it off and they had to get down and go under a projection, a piece that projected out from the side and it would be out of sight and they couldn't have any way to, to, to see the thing. And then they took it off of there and put it and had that. And then we had a little motorized test that the piece went round and round and every time it came by, they put on three pieces in it and we could change the speed that this thing was going and we started out pretty slow and they'd put these three pieces on there, and they put three more on there. And then we speed it up just a little bit and they put three more on there.

And we could push them pretty hard with this, but we found out, what we were finding out on this, we weren't worried about, I didn't care about what they were actually physically doing, because whether they put these pieces together or whether they worked out at another factory out here and they put these three pieces together, you know.

**Nancilou**

But you were checking to see if they those skills. If they were able to...

**Poole**

Yeah, If I, if they could do something very repetitive and learn it and—RIDAC was just serving Central Arkansas and like I said a while ago when the counselors in the state got all disturbed, because they said, "Them guys in Little Rock get everything." So, we designed programs and wound up with seven areas in the state. And it does, there were several counties in an area. And then we— [lightly pounding on table]

**Nancilou**

Send people.

**Poole**

Set up something very similar to what we were doing in Little Rock in each one of those areas. And that went on as we had it designed then for, oh I don't know.

**Nancilou**

It was as long as you were there.

**Poole**

Well yeah, for I guess twenty years.

**Nancilou**

Yeah, you were there from...

**Poole**

Now, they're still, they still use something very similar to what we had, but they still need to gain the same kinds of information and so that's what they're doing. And, frankly though I'm glad I'm retired now. [laughter]

**Nancilou**

It's been awhile since you retired.

**Poole**

Yes. Well, I don't know. I'm forty, I'm fifty...

**Nancilou**

[whispers] eighty-five.

**Poole**

Eighty-five? I'm eighty-five years old now. Now, what else would you like to have me, oh! I just thought of something—huh.

**Nancilou**

You did good.

**Poole**

That's one of those fleeting moments. [laughter]

**Davis**

Well, I think that's actually a good place to stop, if that's okay with you.

**Poole**

Oh, it's fine with me! [laughter] You know, I wasn't all that thrilled starting in the first place. No, I just said that. [laughing] That's not true.

**Nancilou**

Can you erase parts?

**Davis**

They'll edit all that stuff out.

**Nancilou**

Okay.

**Davis**

But Glyn, thank you for participating, and Nancilou and Ashley also for being here.

**Nancilou**

Oh, you're welcome.

**Davis**

I really appreciate it.

**Poole**

You're very welcome. As I said, it was an interesting time for me because we did a lot of new stuff. But a lot of what we started up there then, uh, not in necessarily the same form we were doing it in, but that idea has expanded to cover the state and they still do a lot of stuff that reminds me of the kinds of stuff that we were doing. And that makes me feel real good to know that we did something that was lasting.

*End of interview*