

## **John Dycus and Dorothy Estes**

### **Co-founder of UT Arlington's Handicapped Students Association and Arlington Handicapped Association, former advisor for the UT Arlington Shorthorn**

*Interview conducted by  
Dr. Sarah Rose and Trevor Engel  
in 2016 in Arlington, Texas*

Disability Studies Minor  
Special Collections and Archives  
University of Texas at Arlington

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### **Biography**

John Dycus was born in 1949 and grew up in Arlington and Fort Worth, Texas. He obtained his K-12 education in Fort Worth, attending Paschal High School, class of 1965. Between kindergarten through eighth grade, Dycus attended special education classes, which were not offered when he reached high school at Paschal High. After graduating high school he attended the University of Texas at Arlington and graduated in 1970.

While in college, he met the charismatic Sam Provence and Jim Hayes and advocated with them for independent living and other disability rights in the Arlington area. He was one of the founders of Helping Restore Ability (HRA, originally the Arlington Handicapped Association). He served as president of the board in the 1980s. In 1997, HRA named him their Man of the Year. In the 1970s, Dycus served on the Texas Developmental Disabilities Council, which is a governor-appointed committee that advises the state legislature on policies related to disability and people with disabilities. In 1974, he was given a Governor's Citation for his work on the council.

Apart from his activism, he worked for thirty-five years as student advisor for the UTA student newspaper, *The Shorthorn*, and a copy-editor for the Fort Worth Star - Telegram.

Most recently, in 2010, Dycus received the prestigious Howard S. Dubin Outstanding Professional Member Award journalism from the Society of Professional Journalists; Dycus also served two consecutive terms as president for the organization's Fort Worth chapter.

### **Topics discussed**

- Undergraduate years at UTA

- Student Publications
  - Career options for John Dycus
  - John Dycus's work with Student Publications
  - Dorothy Estes's journalism career
  - Community ties within Student Publications
  - Dorothy Estes autobiography
  - Interactions with other disability rights activists
  - Estes's and Dycus's contributions to Student Publications
- 

## **Dycus**

Is that close enough?

## **Rose**

Yes. It is. This is Sarah Rose.

## **Engel**

And Trevor Engel.

## **Rose**

<topic>Undergraduate years at UTA</topic>

On July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at John Dycus's house. And we're interviewing Dorothy Estes and John Dycus for the Texas Disability History Collection. And so...I have a packet of *Shorthorn* articles

here. What we've heard from Joseph Rowe when we interviewed him was that sometime while he was at UTA in 1965 to 1970, so a little before...actually a little later...

**Dycus**

I was a student. Dorothy was not there at all.

**Rose**

But basically, there was an article that almost got...that pissed off Nedderman so much...

**Dycus**

Nedderman wasn't impressed.

**Rose**

I know. That's what's weird about it. That you and Province and Rowe almost got expelled.

**Dycus**

No.

**Rose**

Okay. He was very enatic about that.

**Dycus**

I don't know about Joe and Sam, but I doubt it when you hear from me.

**Rose**

Oh, okay.

**Estes**

And Dr. Nedderman was the one president who never, ever tried to interfere with *The Shorthorn*. He said one time, "I frequently disagree...or I sometimes disagree, but I've never picked a fight with anybody who bought barrel by the ink...Ink by the barrel!"

**Rose**

So the one...is there something that you wondered about?

**Dycus**

Yes.

**Rose**

Okay. Since this Dear John editorial satirical. It's a little later from 1971, right when Jim Hayes and you arrived and when you would have been working for *The Shorthorn*.

**Estes**

And I would have been here.

**Dycus**

And what was the theme of it? What was the thesis of the thing?

**Estes**

It's the wheelchair. It's the standard wheelchair: 25 in wide. The standard bathroom is still not wide enough.

**Rose**

And it's...

**Dycus**

Yeah, I did not write that. Somebody wrote it, but I edited it probably at that era. So, depending on how much you do, there could be some of your flavor. But I don't recall writing that. Did anyone tell you I did?

## **Rose**

No. But we've wondered...

## **Dycus**

<topic>Student Publications</topic>

It was a student publication. And the way Dorothy and I approached this...now don't you correct anything. I'll say it directly. Dorothy became the administrator and had sacrificed her writing, which was sharp as a tack during that time, sacrificed in order to be...in order to make it run. To collect the money, to make people happy...

## **Estes**

To pay the bills.

## **Dycus**

To keep it structured. And she hired me to help the students to put out a better newspaper. And what we did that no one else did, or does, we were hands-on in the editing process. That our students will write the story, bring it to me and we would go over it. And, "I want you to do this and this and this and some of this."

And if there were time, we would go rewrite and bring it back. And they didn't do it. That's how you learn. You don't learn how to work on a newspaper by sitting in a classroom...I don't care how good it is. You can pick up some elements that then you would take to your newsroom. But if you don't...if you are not practicing it and being critique with someone who knows what's she's doing, he's doing, then you are not going to do better.

I went to a graduation one day in Texas Hall, which does now have some of the finest handicapped seating in the world. Little nooks throughout the building for wheelchairs. Brilliant! I don't know who did that. This was years ago of course. And I sat next to a little, old lady in a wheelchair and struck up a conversation, "Why are you here?"

"Oh, that's my grandson right there walking across."

"Wonderful! What was his major?"

"Oh he was a journalist major."

Well, I didn't know him. I've never met him. Then I got bated with the old lady, bless her heart. I said, "What...did he have an internship while he was here?"

"No, no."

"Did he work for the school paper?"

"No, no he did not."

"Well, does he have any experience for the industry?"

And she said, "No, he's going to graduate and get a job and then get his experience."

Well he went straight to McDonald's as a trainee. He didn't make it in journalism because you have to get your journalism experience at a paper. And so that's the way we did it.

## **Estes**

Well and the other thing we did was we made sure that any changes that was made in their copy that it was a learning experience for the student. In the few years right before I came, the student would go through an edited in the best way they could. And some of them were very bright, specialty people like...But they didn't have the overview. They didn't have the whole history of the university. And even good journalists and professors and administrators have been known to manipulate student reporters. And student reporters can be manipulated because they are eager to please because they are impressed for the credentials of their administrators and faculty. So one of the things that I was able to do was to be sure that the students knew that any changes that were made to protect them from themselves because one student made a mistake, then the entire paper was discredited. And that's happened over a few times, something we weren't aware of. So our job was really to protect the integrity of the newspaper. And actually it amounted to protect the integrity of the university because if some statements were made that were totally false or misleading, then the entire movement wouldn't have any credibility. And at one time, the students would do the best they could and then they would leave them the material ready for the printer in a stack. And a faculty member, who also taught the number of English courses and one Journalism course, would come down, pick it up and check to see if they had committed libel. And they did. They had marked it out. But there was no interchange between...there was no communication between him and the person who did it. Now maybe that happened the next day. So John and I were determined that hopefully it will be done in the process of whatever left. But the student would not only know what was changed, but why. And I think that worked for everybody.

## **Dycus**

And the libel situation got into it. I let them get through it anyway.

## **Estes**

Well actually one person, and a manager at a ball game that a student just made up. He made up a quote from a ball game. And it was printed and since we had to do it about the ball game, we had no way of knowing. And that hurt us.



## **Dycus**

Well that was one instance. The other time I...you are always getting into trouble with your best students because you trust them the most. And so, we are all faculty. But our job was to help them say what they wanted to say back. He brought me a story and I would say it this way, and you would say it that way. I would lobby perhaps for, let's say it this way...my way because of this, this and this. And if they bought into that, then it became their story. It's always their story.

We were accused one time by a dear woman, colleague of North Texas University, the late Carmen Mitchell said the reason that you win so many awards is that you write all your stories. That just didn't sound great. I just write their stories. But we...that's how we taught it. The same time, that's how we taught. And when I left the building the last time as a full-time person, we had 600 names on the sheets of paper, hanging down side my office wall where our graduates were. We knew every one of those students. Who they were married to, the spouses' name, how many kids they had...we might not know their names. But these were all in newspapers back before the purges began and the oligarchs took control. And they got those jobs. They landed those jobs not because I was writing the stories because they would have fallen on their faces...if that had been the case.

And the way we taught was hands-on, we did it...this thing. Pretty severely make it better. And then they come back to you the following week, and some of the things we talked about last week, problems aren't there anymore! They had learned and that's how we did it, and that's what set us apart. But it began with Dorothy Estes encouraging me to do that. This has to be at the top. If she wanted me to do a written critique every day at the paper...at North Texas, they called it a 'slash session'.

## **Rose**

I wonder if we could back up.

## **Dycus**

We can't back up. What was I saying?

**Estes**

We you said it well and it was the truth.

**Rose**

You talked about mentoring and the 600 names.

**Dycus**

The 600 names. Yeah.

**Rose**

And the fact it came from Dorothy...

**Dycus**

Our critique is ready to critique. If I had to do that, that would have...

## **Estes**

And this happens on...in fact, this is the general philosophy for the National Journalism thing is that the paper is published, then the advisor/director will slash and then point out all mistakes. And at that point, you've embarrassed the student reporter and as well hurt the credibility of the paper. And we just thought that was foolish.

## **Dycus**

Well that was counterproductive. And a student is not interested in...she may want to be, but it's already out there and it's already printed. And I don't care what you tell me that I should have done, I can't do it now. And so I can never improve that story. So we did all of our teaching on the front end. And a little bit of the summary often with a guest, professional at a staff meeting on Friday. But that's how it worked for us and the results were phenomenal. And nobody ever got it. Nobody out there ever saw that maybe these people were so successful because they are not doing it. They are doing it differently from the way we do it. And they're winning. I wonder why? Well we don't know. We can't figure that out. But that was what...that was the key. And it began in inventory.

## **Rose**

And so how did you develop the...? And if we could back up a bit and more broadly talk about your background and how you came to UTA.

## **Estes**

Well I had wanted to work at UTA forever because my husband did and he is so devoted to the university. But because there was a nepotist rule that if two people in the same department, neither of them could be hired. Or one of them could be hired, but not the other. And so for about three or four years, UTA would call up to North Texas and say, "We really need somebody with a Master's degree."

Well they were just beginning their Master's program and I was the first one through. I wanted to be a teacher and I wanted to work with college newspapers. So they would get my name and say, "We would just have one. And we highly recommended her."

Or, "We can't hire her because her husband is in the English department. And right now, Student Publications is part of the English department. And he would be her...at the time, he was assistant chair. And he would be her boss."

So finally, about the third or fourth time they called up, and the same thing happened because there still wasn't another person that met that description. They said, "Well, why don't they just get a divorce and live together instead?"

But we thought that wouldn't be such a good idea for our teenage children.

## **Rose**

So what about the English department? They could divorce Student Publications.

## **Estes**

So later, they relaxed it. And if they really needed somebody who's a real, they prefer not to have married couples for obvious...I can't see why, especially in a position like this where had I chosen to, I could have influenced editorial content. That never had...you don't have to encourage students that's to be nosey. They're actually nosey, especially journalist students. SO they don't need any encouragement. They kind of need some kind of chain around them to hold them back to keep from doing harm to themselves. But that was my philosophy. And I had worked in a community college, TCC, and it was fun! The students weren't mature enough. I really wanted to work with young adults and people who were ready to become professional. And I decided that it would be much more interesting to be involved in that process. And what I didn't know was that there was so many students and they were publishing four different publications. They had two magazines, a yearbook and a newspaper. And the yearbook from the year before hadn't been completed. In fact, all ninety-six pages had been turned in and none of them were in order. So none of it could be printed. So the first year, there were two yearbooks to do and two magazines...

## **Rose**

What was the magazines?

## **Dycus**

<topic>Career options for John Dycus</topic>

One was a library magazine and then the other was a popular magazine. So John kind of took over the magazine duties. And then I'm not all that good with management. And then another insight into...and this brings us back to the handicapped thing tangentially. When we started, I said I kept trying to get John involved in the business affairs because I didn't have business training either. I had done it...I learned through high school and a community college paper. But there was still a lot I needed to know. John had a degree in accounting and I kept saying, "John, why don't you come in here and let's talk about the business part of it."

And he would always give me some tactful reason of why he shouldn't come in and talk about the business. And finally, I said, "You have some training and knowledge that's I'll never have. So why won't you come in and talk about it?"

Well he said, "Well I don't like Accounting."

I said, "Well why did you major in it?"

[Phone rings. Dycus answers call.]

Well I asked, "Why did you major in Accounting?"

He said, "Because that's where they put handicapped people there."

## **Dycus**

Did I tell you about that other story? My Accounting, my Book-Keeping teacher from Pascal High School, was a guy with a crewcut named Barry Sullivan. No relation to the actor, but the same name. And I was good at it in high school. And I recall him telling me, "Well you probably ought to major in Accounting?"

"What is that?"

"Well you can do it sitting down."

**Rose**

I think that we heard part of it, but not all of it. That's a good story.

**Dycus**

Yes, and he's considered racist today or homophobic or something bad.

**Rose**

Ablelist.

**Dycus**

Ableist. But he was right. But I had no idea what I wanted to do, so sure. I majored in Business and graduated in Accounting. But I was really good at it and I didn't...I didn't focus. I was in love and in the last semester, she died. Spent in between the semesters...

**Rose**

Gay Vaanderer?

**Dycus**

Gay Vaanderer. So I was literally... 'love' just may be harsh. I was smitten. And that was kind of... put me off-balanced that kind of last semester. Then I graduated.

**Estes**

<topic>John Dycus's work with Student Publications</topic>

And the way I found John. It was a morning, noon and night job the way I was doing it. Now to sit down there, we almost had no equipment. All the furniture had come from the surplus. And it looked like we were about the third or fourth, sometimes fifth owners. I got several splinters in my legs from some of the furniture. And ancient typewriters. Not enough chairs. But I noticed that the students were very prompt to go to work. And I thought, "Well they must be really motivated."

Finally, I realized that the reason that they rushed in was that they wanted to get a few chairs so that they have a chair and a typewriter. So we were trying to put in a few more hours than we should have to get the paper out. And I was sitting there one night and I kept hearing them say, "If we just had John Dycus (and of course I had no idea who John Dycus was 'cause I had never met him)."

And I said, "Well who is John Dycus and why do we need him?"

And they said, "Well when he was here, he was a proofreader. And he caught out mistakes. And we didn't do foolish things."

And I said, "Well where is he now? Is there any hope of getting him?"

"Yeah, he's at home writing movie reviews for *The Star Telegram* and doing a few little things like that."

**Dycus**

...What time was this? What month was this? What month? What year?

**Estes**

Well it was 1970.

**Dycus**

Uh-hm. 1970. Would it have been around August?

**Estes**

No...it was after they started trying to remove the papers.

**Dycus**

September?



## **Estes**

Uh-huh. It was like September, October.

## **Dycus**

It was...I was languished and unemployed at home 'cause I had been the interim movie reviewer. I graduated that May and went to work for *The Star Telegram* reviewing movies in the subapical of a man named Ellison Brooks, who was the dean of *Star Telegram* reviewers. That's also on a tape that you and I did. Ellison went to the Window Dinner Theater down the river. Trinity, forest park area to meet Felix in the alcove. And so I got to do movie reviews.

And so the story goes. Perry Stewart tells this story. At a party, somebody was telling Brooks, "Who's this guy writing reviews? He's pretty good?"

And Ellison cut his short acting career to come back to work. And which at that point, I was unemployed. So I was sitting there, waiting for somebody to call. And Dorothy did.

## **Estes**

And there wasn't a position for him. But we had a clerk typist job. And she wasn't a very good typist. So I found her another job on campus. And we heard that John is a clerk typist. So for years, he was on the budget as a clerk typist, although that was never his duties. He is one of the better typists that I've seen. But it was because of what he did.

## **Rose**

So I wanted to ask how did you get into movie theaters for reviewing movies in the late sixties or early seventies. How many of them were accessible?

**Dycus**

They all were.

**Rose**

Oh really? They all had ramps?

**Dycus**

No, well they were flat. You didn't have steps. I think the last time we went to a movie theater, they had steps. I've been to The Hollywood, The Palace, downtown. The few rampless theaters they were all flat. You did not have a curb cut from the parking lot up to the concrete ribboned around the building. But if you could get up there, there was no...And somebody had to drive me of course. I hadn't been driving then. My mother would take me and I had a fold-up wheelchair. So she would put her wheelchair in the back.

**Estes**

And it was heavy.

**Dycus**

Well, it didn't have any batteries. It was not the motorized chair. But she took me to these movies, many of which she didn't approve me seeing. Took me all over the county. But that's how I got to do that.

## **Estes**

But anyway...and I kept trying to change John's job title to reflect what he did. Now I would say 'editorial adviser'. But they said there was not a position like in the budget. Now I said, "Well, but that's what he does, so why can't it be?"

"Well it's just not in the budget books, so we can't use it. Make him an editor too."

I said, "No, the students do the editing. And that would upset everything. That's not the way we operate. So he can't be an editor because that really wasn't what he did."

He actually trained copy editors.

## **Dycus**

Trained copy editors.

## **Estes**

And reporters while he was training. 'Cause he'd make them both sit there one-on-one on either side and listen to this editing process, which took longer than it would have. Which I asked John to slice through it and clean it up.

## **Dycus**

But that's what we taught. Another anecdote on this...how much I did or did not do. It was one of my duties, which was to gather the material. Actually, my mother gathered it and I told her what to gather to enter in a contest. We did four or five big contests every year. Dorothy is fiercely competitive. We would go to these conventions and she would sit there at the awards banquet with little tablets. And she would tally up everybody's win. You got so many points per win and so many points for a second place, so many points for a third. Sweepstakes were your goal of course. Dorothy was not happy if we didn't win. She wanted to win.

But I never entered in anything that I was so heavily involved in that I didn't think it was fair. And one afternoon, **Mariam Polski** and I...now she's **Mary Duncan**. We were doing a headline and it was about bottled water. The dangers of bottled water. And both of us, at the same instance, came up with the headline, was, "Just Say H<sub>2</sub>O!"

And I wanted to enter that, but I didn't because I thought I had too much of a role in it.

## **Estes**

So sometimes, we've bend over backwards trying to preserve what we saw as the integrity of the paper.

## **Dycus**

But that's how we taught.

## **Rose**

And so your title, Dorothy was...?

## **Estes**

Director of Student Publications.

## **Rose**

Okay. And what did you...what was your position prior to being hired at UTA? You said you...

## **Estes**

Actually, the year before I came, I decided to go straight and be an English professor. So I think I had been teaching...no. I guess. In 1966, I was teaching full-time. English full-time in Texas Westley and I had been teaching Journalism in public high schools. And a number of my better students were there. So when I was hired, of course they wanted my classes and they wanted me to come to the newsroom. But I didn't want to do anything to upset what was working already. And I knew and liked their advisor. And she wasn't as assertive or aggressive as I want. I knew if I get into it, I would upset the votes. So I taught English all year and I tried to be a full-time mother. My son was graduating from high school. I was feeling guilty about all of the cookies I hadn't baked. But in the process of being just an English professor, I got depressed. I even went to this guy and said, "I think I'm going crazy because I'd just start crying."

And he went through his past and we talked. He said, "You're not crazy. You're just not doing what you want to do. Go home and tell your family that you are going back to journalism and see what happens."

So I went home and told him what he had said. And both kids said, "Mother, you don't bake very good cookies anyway and we'd rather have you happy."

And they've been not at home so much and coming home late. So that's how it happened. And then I went to a...Well I was out to dinner with my husband and TCC had had just...was beginning to open and they were looking for someone to be a Director of Student Publications.

**Rose**

And what year was this?

**Estes**

That would have been 1967. Probably, that was 1966 when it started. And they needed someone with a Master's degree who had had publication experience. And they asked me to apply. And I don't even think I sent in a resume because I didn't have one ready and I didn't have time to do it. But they went back with a copy of my transcript and I guess a record of my teaching. I taught about fifteen or sixteen years with them. And so I was hired without ever being interviewed. And then I was there for three years and we were competing with UTA. And in one of the contests, the community college students beat *The Shorthorn*. And Donna was editor and they decided, "Well if she could do that with community college people, then we want her over here letting her do it for us."

So that's how it happened.

**Rose**

So did the students petitioned?

**Estes**

...No. I think they just went in and told Charles Down that they had a person for the position. And then I know I didn't send in a resume. 'Cause there was never time to sit down and write resumes. There was too much...when you are doing publications, you never get it all done. If you work a little bit longer, it will be a little bit better.

**Rose**

<topic>Dorothy Estes's journalism career</topic>

Wow! So tell us about your teaching career and how you got interested in all...

**Estes**

I just have always loved journalism.

**Rose**

In high school or...?

**Estes**

Even in high school. Of course, I was in high school during World War II. And we didn't have...I think we had six or seven English teachers that year. So actually, I graded all of the English papers. And so when the teachers were trying to learn everybody's name, their husbands would be transferred. Their husbands were all either being drafted or being sent overseas. And they followed their husbands. So I didn't have that good of a high school...except that I learned a lot grading papers.

And then I went to college and my first job at college...

**Rose**

And when was this?

## **Estes**

It was East Texas Baptist College. They didn't have a journalism program, but they had a newspaper. So I was the editor of the high school newspaper. And the high school yearbook went to ETBC and my first job was working in the music department, setting up a library for the music department. And of course, I had no librarian training or skills. But somehow, I was writing alone and then this English teacher realized that I could grade papers.

So I was hired to grade English papers for my freshman class that I was enrolled in at \$0.25 an hour. AND I worked my way through four years of school grading English papers for those \$0.25 an hour.

## **Dycus**

I haven't heard that.

## **Estes**

And I edited again. I edited the yearbook and the newspaper at different times. So it was on-the-job training. I knew how important it was to have an advisor in the room with you when you are doing it because I look back at those yearbooks and thought, "They are so embarrassing."

The things that I just thought were hilarious were so tired and so silly that I won't even look at them anymore. And I hid them. I didn't even want my students to ever see them because they did all the things that I taught them not to do. So anyway, that's how it all started.

## **Rose**



And then you taught, you said for fifteen years?

**Estes**

I taught maybe fifteen or sixteen years in public school. And that was fun. I taught at Palmer when it was at its height. And in fact I taught two Fort Worth mayors, a number of doctors, lawyers, some plumbers, some good businessmen, some wonderful people.

**Dycus**

Bill Meyers?

**Estes**

Who?

**Dycus**

Bill Meyers? Where was he in that?

**Estes**

Oh he was my first-year student in junior high. That was a mess.

## **Dycus**

Junior high or junior college?

## **Estes**

Junior high.

## **Dycus**

Junior high. Bill Meyer now.

## **Estes**

I was a terrible junior high teacher. I was young and not that much...many of the students were much larger and taller than I was. And I'd been teaching college. I could walk in because I was given first a remedial class before I graduated. And then one of the professors got sick. And now I taught in an accredited, freshman English class before graduating. So I was so much younger than the other teachers that they were very smitten with me. Like, I'd walk in and say 'good morning' and they'd **write it down**. I walked into a room of thirty-five junior high school kids. They laughed. So it was not a good experience for me, but I did have good lawyers and again, I was advisor of the paper...But what they didn't tell me was that I was co-advisor and the co-advisor was an English teacher who didn't have a clue about journalism. And she would write the paper. Well, Bill Meyers would write it. He was the editor and practically the whole staff. He would write it and then we would go to her house on Sunday afternoon. And she would rewrite everything he wrote. But didn't talk to him. She just sat in the corner and rewrote it. Now he sat in another corner, then I sat in a third corner and I was supposed to type it. And no one has ever accused me of being a good typist, but I had to type a stencil and it was a stencil newspaper, which is an art onto itself that I never quite mastered. So I swore...

**Rose**

Can you explain what is a stencil newspaper is?

**Dycus**

You know what a stencil is?

**Rose**

Yeah.

**Estes**

Well you have to type it all on there to make it fit. And then...it's a big, blue, ugly page and then you put it on...most of the time, I would put it on the machine upside down and it would come out backwards.

**Dycus**

And if you make a mistake, just a typo and you want to fix it, there's stencil fluid that you have to put on the end and start over.

**Estes**

And there's this glue, big glob of glue...

## **Dycus**

A horrible mechanism for these students. People they cannot relate to.

## **Estes**

And it's ugly. The final print is ugly. But I did that for several years. My first newspapers were that way. But by then, most of the time I had a student who knew more about typing than I did and they could type the product. But it was a terrible process. But one time, we were doing a PTA meeting at the Polly, and I said...we had it printed in the newspaper and we didn't have enough money to print a special edition for the PTA meeting. And I went to the principle and said that it would be so great if we could do a little paper talking about a new program so that parents would understand more of what their students were doing. And so we typed it up. I think I had a student type it, but I went down to print it out. And I put the front page on backwards and it came out totally backwards. And so here was the front page that nobody could read. And I used up all the paper I had in the budget, like over 2,000 copies. And I thought, "Maybe I should tell the principal before that night. 'Cause he would get really upset and yell. He got angry. And so I went down and said, "I'd rather he yelled at me when nobody is listening. We have an auditorium full of parents."

So I told him, I said...I didn't tell him it was a mistake. I said, "We've done this very clever thing to be sure they read it. And all they have to do is go to the bathroom and hold it up in the mirror and it will read. And they can read it. And it's going to make them read it and pay really close attention to page one. And then they can turn over to page two and read it with ease."

And he grumbled a little bit, but he didn't yell. So anyway, I guess I wanted to go to a place where these were real grownups writing stories, or young adults. And have a professional printer print them.

## **Dycus**

We had the best journalism teaching job that you could want because every student [clock chimes] in that program wanted to be there. There was some monetary compensation and Dorothy was able to get a little more money for our kids than other people got for theirs.

## **Estes**

Well only the editor got money.

## **Dycus**

That's true. That's true. But they all wanted to be there. The poster classroom situations where some of them are asleep, they have no aptitude. That sure made it nice. I was better at what I did because I had such quality people to keep me motivated. Wanted to be there.

## **Estes**

Actually, my goal was to make the paper professional. And you had to have some means of reward than patting somebody on the head and say, "Good job."

Doesn't work that well for people who are young, twenties and thirties. Some of these people were over thirty. So we were able to...first, we were able to pay the editors. The section editors. And then we got to the point where we could pay reporters because if we didn't pay them, they'd have to take a job off campus. And you can't learn journalism while you are flipping hamburgers. So it was part of the strategy to make it a professional operation. Or make it as professional as we could be with experienced amateurs.

## **Dycus**

We paid by the column inch, which we were criticized for because it encouraged people to write long. And but the only way that worked was for the editors to be committed to throw away all the stuff that wasn't needed. So if I'm paying you for a 15-inch story, we can pretty much guarantee that there's no fluff in there because it was our program and I was working with the editors and the students and they were working with each other and took pride in doing a tight product. For several years, we also didn't pay you for a story if you misspelt a proper name. Well that was...the students didn't like that either. Some of them didn't. And we used to do too much trouble to enforce and we dropped that. But I'll bet you they still remember that once upon a time, they worked at a pen-and-paper. And if they got a name wrong, Sara Rose with no 'h' in Sarah, you didn't get paid your twenty bucks story.

## **Estes**

Well this process also created more work for John because he had to go through and keep record, inch by inch he had to measure the whole paper every day.

## **Dycus**

I had some kind of student collective help, but there was that. That was that.

## **Estes**

But it made of course the poor people we had for business, we had only kids working on the business part. And that was kind of exciting 'cause about the time they learned all of the very complicated university business procedures, they would graduate. And they also got good jobs because they had that experience. 'Cause then they would have to start all over with a new group. So we did many things the hard way, but we thought it was the right way.

## **Dycus**

Dorothy had a knack for finding students and bringing the very best that they had. Things they didn't know they could do. And she was great with office staff. People who couldn't answer the phone, they could now. And people who didn't know business, they could do spreadsheets and it was all...Dorothy was amazing at that. And we had an excellent recruiting network. Everybody knew Dorothy Estes throughout the state in the journalism business. Junior colleges. And we would snag people from Amarillo and Corpus Christi and Austin and San Antonio. And they all wanted to come to UTA because of Dorothy and because of the quality of the program. She was very good at that. Very good at that.

### **Estes**

Well the main thing was we helped the students become a family. And they used to turn up their noses at some of the fraternities because they say that they'll just do so limited to their group that their not trying to meet up with other students or listen to other students. But we made sure that they learned to respect and help them like each other. And in fact, many of them fell in love and got married. But they became a family. They took care of each other.

### **Dycus**

And they became cliquish in a sense that they expressed disdain in the Greek systems. They were just as bad within their own group.

### **Estes**

And then we used to tell them this, "Well, you're in a fraternity, so get over it."

### **Dycus**

And even to that extent, you have the photographers over here and the writers over here. And if you go to the bank with the photographers, they just tended to kind of clump together.

## **Estes**

But that was all actually a part of my job was to try to keep the different departments. Because every 24-hours, especially after we went daily. Every 24-hours, something was being done on *The Shorthorn* four days a week. Four days and four nights. And it hurts the photography students 'cause they knew more than anybody. And they very good. And they were most likely self-taught. And they taught each other. And we also imposed on the professionals. We would send them over to shadow the photographers from *The Dallas Times Herald* and *The Dallas Morning News* and *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*. And so they had like big brothers and big sisters helping them along. And then we started to decide we would send them to a big news event. And for some reason, besides that they need to learn the cover with an earthquake in Mexico.

## **Dycus**

I think so.

## **Estes**

And for some reason, I sent a photographer to Mexico. And we didn't have enough money for a hotel bill, so they slept on the floor of *The Dallas Morning News*. And then they would run film around and help the photographers. But in return, they were learning from the best. And those were the kids that came on in the same group. And then they would train the next group 'cause none of us really knew of any photography. But we knew people who knew photography. And then once they learned it, they tried the next group. And they recruited and screened the next group 'cause there are a lot of kids that would come in that knew the vocabulary for photography. And they would haul very complicated docs. They couldn't take a single photograph. One person who was so livid I'll never forget it, and he would take a picture and their head would be cut off. So we decided, "Let's just let the kids manage it."



Anyway, we trained wonderful photographers to designers. We didn't really design either. But we own design, state, national.

**Dycus**

We won every major award for college journalism more than once. The one Dorothy really wanted was the pacemaker for ACP?

**Estes**

Well I wanted to win all three at one time.

**Dycus**

Did you do that? Did you ever do that?

**Estes**

No. It would be...One year, we won the Top National awards. And then the TIPA. And the only criticism he could find in our paper was that the printer used too much ink on the half-columns and we had no control over that. And I was so angry. We weren't even entered in TIPA for a year, which was cutting my nose off...or cutting their nose off. Just bite my face.

**Dycus**

I told the students in journalism contests, "If you win, it only proves that your idea of what's right and the judge's idea of what's right match up. And you could both be wrong."

So we didn't do stories...I didn't do the things I did before to win contests. We did it for quality work and to meet the needs of constituents. Students and faculty at UTA, if we were accurate, if we were on time, if we gave all sides to a story and if it read good, it came out the next day. We all knew it read good, that was our reward. Then down the line, when some judge gives it a win, well that's even better. But if it doesn't, it's okay because we knew that we had a quality product. But that's the way we played the judging business. I didn't do stuff for awards. I did stuff for the people of UTA.

## **Estes**

I think another reason we won so much was that there's some real good papers in Texas. It was because John kept file. Each day the paper would come out, he would lock the stories that our photos were outstanding. And he kept his file at home. And his mother, bless her heart, would cut them out and then she would mount them. And they were mounted so neatly and so perfectly and then we would bring people in from the outside. So we judged our own contests before we let them. And then we took the best of that and then set it in. It's not a part of the fact we won...

## **Dycus**

We worked really hard at that process. And then the contests back then, it was a print-based operation of course. And they were very persnickety on the way they wanted the entries presented. And it was an awful lot of work.

## **Estes**

And if you pasted it on wrong or crooked...

## **Dycus**

...You'd lose some kind of psych or whatever. So my mother was very precise and she took pride in what she did. She did a very good job of cutting out these stories and mounting them. And some of them wanted you to staple the sheets together. Some of them wanted you to tape them together. Some contests didn't want you to do anything. So you had to remember which one was which. And we would be working multiple contests at the same time.

## **Estes**

And they were all due about the same period.

## **Dycus**

All due about the same time. This stack needs to be stapled and this stack needs to be taped.

## **Estes**

<topic>Community ties within Student Publications</topic>

Well and his mother actually was a non-paid member of the staff. But among other things, every time she would use a grocery coupon for her purchases. She would put up the money she saved in a sugar bowl. And then we would get ready to go on to a convention. And she knew that we didn't have enough travel money to get the kids all of the money they needed to eat. So she would give John an envelope and sit down, get this and divide it up for the ones that need it most so that they can go and be sure that they at least have one good meal a day.

But we cooked food on like every holiday. And I'm sure we violated every health code. We were cooking Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner for the kids. Especially we had so many international students and some people who were out-of-state and couldn't go home. So we were cooking dinner for 75, it got to be 85 and it got to be 90. We said, "Maybe we shouldn't be cooking dinner anymore."

Be we'd cook it and bring it up there. And it was a family holiday when we did it.

## **Rose**

That was you and your husband?

## **Estes**

No it was all the people that worked there. And at first, it was John and me for a long time. And then we hired a real grownup person to do, I don't remember who was the third person. But we hired the photo advisor for a while. And then when we couldn't find a replacement for that person, we finally got grownups. And we should have had a grownup person doing it all. I'm surprised because one time, when we were in Ransom Hall, the heating and cooling system was so bad that my electric typewriter froze and I couldn't type the budget and it was due. And I knew if it wasn't turned in, there would be no money for next year. And I saw some well-dressed looking men down the mall. And one of them was the chancellor and I really did like the chancellor. So I was just so furious. I was sitting down with my coat and a hat on and gloves. And my typewriter froze and I couldn't do the budget. And I knocked on the window and just motioned for him to come inside and just see how terrible things were. And it was pointed out to me later that when you see a group of well-dressed people walking down the mall, perhaps you should not be tapping on the window and inviting them into your office. But we soon got a new building.

## **Dycus**

I remember that winter we were all dressed up as doctors. It was a really cold...and the wind would kind of whistle through where the glass didn't quite meet the wall...

## **Estes**

That was Preston.

## **Dycus**

That was Preston. That was Preston Hall. Were you talking about Ransom?

## **Estes**

No that was Preston. And they kind of rebuilt Ransom part of it for us. But in the meantime, they had to get us out of the University Center because they needed that space for somebody. So we were there for over a year. And of course, the kids loved it because we had like two floors that were mostly ours. And then the third floor was still a classroom. [machine operating] But it would leak so much that one day, the whole ceiling of the advertising part fell down and just missed our best salesperson. Collapsed with wires and sparks flying all over the room.

## **Dycus**

On the wall of that Student Publications Offices, you see that sign? That came from Preston. When it was time for us to go to the Promise Land...Ransom...we tried to preserve some pieces as well.

## **Estes**

And actually, our students have many talents. Some of which were journalistic and others, somewhat different. But we got ready to leave, and they said, "Can we take a few souvenirs?"

We thought they were gonna just gut the building and through everything in the dump. And I didn't realize they sold a salvage right. So I went over to a meeting and I wasn't gone. It was a meeting in Davis Hall and I think it lasted three hours. And I got back and the phone was ringing. And I believe it was Vice President Wetsel, the vice president on money, said, "Dorothy, will you tell your students to bring the building back?"

I said, "Well what do you mean?"

"It seems they have stripped the paneling in all the floors."

All three floors of Ransom. This was in three hours and all of the doorknobs. And I said, "Wasn't that stuff going to the dump anyway?"

"No, we sold the salvage rights. It belongs to somebody else."

So I hung up the phone. I said, "Anybody been removing siding?"

"Uhh...yeah."

Somebody went, they brought it all back. And it's probably the fastest salvage job. We should have built a school for salvaging labor.

Rose

What were they going to do with sighting?

Estes

Probably build a...

**Dycus**

Build a house.

**Estes**

Probably going to go and put it in their houses.

**Dycus**

There was a bathroom on the ground floor of Preston. One of our editors, who is to this day on Facebook still, had drawn comic book characters in the bathroom very good. And the corner, it was the boys' bathroom, in the corner where the walls come together he had Spider-Man. You're sitting there and above you is Spider-Man fixing to jump on you. I wish we had pictures of that.

**Estes**

I thought they cut it out of...

**Dycus**

They might have. He also did *The Shorthorn* "Code of Arms" in the editor's area, which was on bare sheetrock. And I think it had a Bernstein and a ballpoint pen and a typewriter and it seemed like a machete. And he cut that out. I bet he still has it.

## **Estes**

One of the editors was nearly killed because a chunk of fell. And if it had not been the bathroom stall...if he'd been standing up and the ceiling had collapsed, it would have killed him. So if he hadn't been in the stall, because the two...the three walls caught it. So I was getting angrier and angrier 'cause I felt like these students who'd worked so hard for and so hard with, probably wouldn't live to graduation.

## **Dycus**

The classroom...the floor was rotted in the classroom. And...

## **Estes**

From all if the dripping ceilings. There were pipes leaking and we weren't sure if those were water pipes, steam pipes or sewage pipes. And that bothered me a lot.

## **Dycus**

And I had to be careful. I didn't want to get too close and fall in. And there was an eccentric, either history or English teacher, and he taught in there one semester. And I can still see him. He would pace. He would pace in front of the class and he would pace up to the hole and he didn't appear to be looking at it. And he got up right to it, lifted his leg to step in it and he would pivot and go back the other direction. And he would go back and stand right above it, turn around and go back. So there was lots of crazy things. What else do you want to know?

## **Rose**



<topic>Dorothy Estes autobiography</topic>

So we get...can we get a little more on you and Dorothy about where you were born, family, where you grew up...?

**Estes**

Oh gracious! Well...

**Rose**

What kind of family background...?

**Estes**

I was born in Dallas and my first bed was a dresser drawer. For some reason, my parents didn't seem to know a baby was on the way enough to get a baby bed. So that's probably the only remarkable thing about my birth. I was the oldest of four children. Was born right in the middle of The Depression. I was the first of three children born almost every year. And then the next one came along. Well he was eleven years younger than I. And that was just The Recession...The Depression was ending. And as a result, we left Dallas because the jobs disappeared very quickly. And my father was doing...the only jobs available at that time were all the old, rough-neck jobs, which were very dangerous.

I think we moved to Hamilton and Sweetwater. And then finally, The Depression was so bad that we moved back to East Texas to the farm where my mother lived in the house with my grandparents. And this was one of my very favorite things is living on the farm. And then this farm house with a dog trap through the front. All the cousins would come, and they were at least two of the families living, one in the same house and another in the near-by neighborhood. So I had three years as a farm girl. And we were too little to do any meaningful work, but we could carry the water out to people in the field in a bucket...Then on the way back home, we could pick berries, nuts, whatever was in season. And that made us feel so important because we were helping feed the family. But we'd slip off and I think we went and waded in

the brook when we weren't supposed to. And at night, we would chase lightning bugs and I'm embarrassed to say we would take jars and punch holes in the top and catch lightning bugs and create our own flashlights, which was very cruel because we were interfering with the reproductive process. We didn't understand that then.

But I guess I grew up always with a crowd of people around me. And I was very comfortable with groups and I always wanted to make everything fun because to me there were always games to play. And I didn't realize we were poor. I didn't even realize it was unfortunate to be poor. And to me, it was just fun.

And then my father became a Baptist minister and he took that very seriously. We all thought about doing things involving the church. But somehow it didn't just take with me. I just...And I think being the oldest of four children, I was just a natural-born teacher. I was used to bossing people around, whether they want to be bossed or not. And usually they didn't. My brothers and sisters did not pay that much attention to me. But anyway, that probably how I got into the teaching.

**Rose**

What year were you born?

**Estes**

In 1927.

**Rose**

Okay. And you graduated high school in...?

## **Estes**

1948. No, 1944. I graduated from college in 1948. My Bachelor's. So I was in high school during World War II. And I had been angry at Hitler ever since ruining my high school days. 'Cause we spent the whole time, every breakfast and dinner, we'd listen to the war news. And of course, I had classmates who were killed before we graduated. The best quarterback we had was killed in North Africa. And that's also the reason why I never could put sugar in my coffee or tea. We would save the stamps, sugar and butter so we could make cookies. You had to have to ration stamps for everything. So everybody that was in our Sunday school class or in their class at school that was overseas...even if they weren't overseas. If they were in the service, they got cookies and candy whether they wanted or not. And the war of course was still going on when I went off to college. And peace wasn't declared until I became a sophomore. And then that's when I met my husband. He was one of the G.I. coming back from the war.

## **Rose**

Oh really, tell us about that.

## **Dycus**

Tell us how you met Dr. Estes.

## **Estes**

Well he had came on campus, and of course we were...there had not been any boys. Most of the boys that were on campus were either married men, older men with children or they were people who had 4Fs.

## **Rose**

I'm sorry. Just to be clear, 4Fs?

**Estes**

Umm-hmm.

**Rose**

So they had disabilities?

**Estes**

Uh-hmm. So we hadn't been around that any red-blooded boys. And see here all these...they came back and they had so many...I loved reading their papers because the average freshman had nothing to say in a paper. It's just working through it. These people had been, their comeback from Europe and Asia, and it was just wonderful. I loved grading all the papers. And they added so much vitality to the campus. And Emery had no intention of staying there. He had been admitted to UT Austin. But there was no housing and we had to prove that you had a room. So we spent three weeks trying to find a room. And of course, there were none because there were other bedrooms that got there first. He was late getting back. He worked under General MacArthur in intelligence worked with the guerillas in the Pacific. And then he was in the MacArthur battles from New Guinea and the Battle of Manila, Leyte Gulf. And he in prison, Nedderman, were both in that battle. President Nedderman was in the Navy. Of course, they didn't know each other then. And there were about four or five other professors that met later at UTA. And we had Paschal Hall on campus? That was named for one of the art teachers. Well he was the Art Department. And he volunteered I think to go to the army and he was killed in the battle of Leyte. And when Emery was hired, they said, "You're stepping the footsteps and there's still a lot of emotion."

**Dycus**

Delmar Paschal?

**Estes**

Uh-hmm. And of course they named that, at least that dorm. One of the oldest ones now.

**Dycus**

Now it's been gone for years.

**Estes**

Is that the one they tore down?

**Dycus**

By the SMART Hospital, nursing annex. Right there by the Music Department. That whole area, that whole strip, from the finance building out to the street. That was Paschal Hall. P-A-C-H-L.

**Rose**

Okay. So we met before, I'm trying to remember the context because I know it comes up in new oral histories.

## **Estes**

But anyway, that is an important part of history. Sam Hamlet in the political science department was in the Battle of New Guinea. And over the Battle of Leyte Gulf, Ted Procter...I think he was in an airplane circling overhead. And then two or three others, and of course none of them knew each other then. But Emery used to tease Wendell Nedderman and said, "While I was in a fox hole on the beach getting shot at, you were out there on a ship with sheets on the bed. I didn't even have a bed."

And they used to fight the Battle of Leyte Gulf. They'd go once a month. And that's after I retired because I didn't socialize with any administrator as long as I was a publication director. But then since he had been neighbors when we first came to Arlington. They met at Joe's Crab Shack once and they fought the battle in the gulf. And the same people won it every year. But they were celebrities. People there wanted to take their photo, but I don't think we ever gave them a copy of it.

## **Dycus**

When Dr. Estes talked about the way he and Dorothy met, they bumped into each other in the hall at East Texas Baptist College. And he knocked her books to the floor, to the ground. So he reached down, gathered up her books. He said, "John!"

When I stood up, I was in love. And that maybe considered a hyperbole kind of like Bill Clinton's early years with Hilary, if you heard that a couple of nights ago. That can't all be precisely the way he told it, but that was the story Dr. Estes told me.

## **Estes**

Well he asked me...he stopped to ask me where a classroom was. And he thought I was a teacher because I was carrying all these papers I had to grade. I have to take home every day...arm-load of...So that he thought I must be a teacher 'cause I had student papers in my

arm, even though I'm just a \$0.25 an hour paper grader. And then we had a conversation. And he was the first man that I had ever met who could quote poetry. And he had a phenomenal memory. And we talked for three hours. And then we went to have coffee. We talked for three more hours. But by that time, it was too late.

And then we went...our poor kids. I mean, I got married before we finished school. We both finished school. While we were still doing undergraduate work. And then all the time we were working on our Master's, we had children. So I had pretty, little children who I dragged around on college campuses.

### **Dycus**

Dorothy and Dr. Estes, in the yearbook photo...maybe from that year. Just gorgeous! They both looked like movie stars. It's a wonderful couple of pictures. I don't know how I came to see them, but they were beautiful. They were just beautiful in those pictures.

### **Estes**

Well it was really funny because we disagreed on a lot of things. But the one thing we agreed on was that we would always listen to every political campaign in both parties and the convention. And so 1948 was the first year I could vote...well it's the first year that Emery could vote because he was first eligible to vote. He was overseas. So when he came back in 1948, I think it was radio. I know we didn't have TV at that time. And I'm not sure the next one was broadcasted on TV or not. But by 1956, whenever the next one was. I know one of them, we had to go to University Center to hear it because...to watch it on TV because we didn't own a TV. But I had listened to all, and I still...I had to record. There were one or two sessions of the Republicans that I just couldn't make it through. So I had recorded it and I would not vote until I listened to every session, all four days of both conventions. But that's not policy, that's political theater.

### **Rose**

And then he...so you went again as PhD?

## **Estes**

Well we got our Master's together. We graduated together in 1956 from North Texas. And then I had accepted a position as assistant to the president, Mary Hardin-Baylor. But he would have had to been a Business major. And he hated business, even more than I did. And so I just thought, "Here's this man who gave the first part of his young manhood to the government, so we could do...And that's what women did then. Nobody ever moved for the wife to take a position she wanted. Although I did think I wasn't good in the president's office. Probably, I would have been a disruption. But anyway, so then I went to high school so that I could get a job here. So I taught in Fort Worth for eleven years. So that's how it all happened.

## **Rose**

And Bill Meyers was...which high school was that?

## **Estes**

He was a junior high. He was Martin Junior High and we had stayed friends. And he was the most remarkable young man. He was such a good student. He probably kept me from committing suicide. There were about five or six really bright kids. And then at that time, students could be failed for insubordination, for misbehaving conduct as they called it. So I did five...not I had five. I had twelve people who had failed from three to five times and most of them was because they didn't behave. But then it got to be a game to see how many times they could repeat the ninth grade. So I had some little boys who were playing Drop the Handkerchief and others who had bothered other children. And they're all in the same room and I'm trying to get them all excited about *A Midsummer Night* greeting. And so thirty-eight in the room, 5 – 38 in a room at one time, five sections of the same thing, which made me even crazier. So anyway, that's why I got pregnant I think so I wouldn't have to teach again.



## Dycus

Dorothy and Dr. Estes in their young, professional lives had actually figured out that whole career. Correct me Dorothy, but Dr. Estes...Dorothy. They seemed to agree that Dorothy's career would advance. And Dr. Estes, of course Dr. Estes's did too. But Dorothy's kind of had the promise. And when Dr. Estes died, Dorothy and I wrote one, killer obituary...which is on the internet at [exdoctors.com](http://exdoctors.com). And it's a piece of work. It's huge! And we submitted it to *The Star Telegram*. Dorothy never asked what it was going to cost. And it was how much? Do you remember how much?

## Estes

I don't know exactly.

## Dycus

Okay, it was just...

## Estes

It was over \$3,000 for two days.

## Dycus

Oh, it was \$3,000. The big, 00. And she...

**Estes**

When she read it all as one paragraph, it made me furious because we fit it in copy-ready.

**Rose**

And I didn't know you had to pay for obituaries.

**Dycus**

Beyond a certain length, yes.

**Rose**

Oh yes.

**Dycus**

But you did tell them, "No, this is...cost is not an object. He sacrificed so much for me. This is his show. This is his story."

**Estes**

And I'm sure he got blamed for things I did. And he was an obvious...he was a real keeper. You go by the rules. If you don't like the rules, you try to change them. But you obey them to the

lightest letter. And at first, we use to have so much political preferences that one time, I developed a psoriasis. I couldn't walk. It was very...it was right when my daughter was getting married and we were having a big wedding. And I'm sure we were having some kind of crisis in Student Publication. And...I couldn't walk. So it was time. And I said, "Now...be sure you come home so you can get me to the poll. If you don't help me get down there, then you are going to cancel my vote."

We were voting for different candidates that year. Most of the time, we could agree on...most of the time. And so my son was playing football. And he came by with three big, ole' football players. And they got there so that they could drop me in in the afternoon. We probably cooked dinner some night and I had dinner cooked. And they said, "That smells pretty good. Could we have some?"

"Well you can have a little snack."

Well I had turned and they had inhaled the whole dinner. And I said, "Okay boys, go back to the dorm, get your voter ID. We are going to go vote. So they went back. So I ended up with five votes for my candidate. And he just had one for his. I don't remember who won the election, but it made me feel much better.

## **Dycus**

Dr. Estes and Dorothy clashed over football.

## **Rose**

I'm sorry?

## **Dycus**

Football. Dr. Estes was head of the Athletics Committee and maybe statewide.

**Estes**

For the whole conference, south.

**Dycus**

For the whole conference, south of conference. And Dorothy thought football was barbaric. And here they have this son who played football. And I think it terrified Dorothy and angered her at the same time. He'd get hit and he'd go down. And oh she hated that.

**Estes**

I'd hate it when he knocked other people down. I thought it was uncivilized.

**Rose**

So what are your kids' names and when were they born?

**Estes**

My children?

**Rose**

Yes, your children.

**Estes**

Oh okay. Emery Estes III. **Emery Dolfus III** was born in 1949...in December 1949. Just barely in time for the tax deductions so I could pay the hospital bill. Otherwise, I would have been in bad trouble. He was a week late. I was getting a bit nervous. And the Sharron was born in 1952. Sharron Gail. And she's in Dallas and he's in...lives out in Burleson. And they're two wonderful kids in spite of my neglect.

**Rose**

<topic>Interactions with other disability rights activists</topic>

So can you tell us about TCJC and meeting Jim Hayes?

**Estes**

That was fun! That was probably the best teaching I've ever done. It was a new campus, new building and everybody had such wonderful dreams. And everybody was either new to each other or they were working with people that they had help recruit. So there were no cliques at all between different faculty members or administrators. And we just had this dream that we were going to help. And it was the first year that students in Fort Worth had ever been integrated. And so we were going to make it all have fun and make everyone live happily ever after. And it was just more fun. It was the best teamwork I've ever seen in any education or any organization. Of course, by the second or third year, it was just like most of the places. But that first year was just great.

**Rose**

And we're in '67?

**Estes**

Uh-hmm.

**Rose**

And '68?

**Estes**

And of course it was like this was right during the Vietnam thing. And there was a lot of dissent. Of course, I was out marching around the flag pole and doing things like that. Wear a black armband. And Emery kept saying, "Dorothy, I'm not sure if that's appropriate for you to be doing that. And you've worked so hard to try to be objective in the press. And you're walking around with that armband. You're sort of discrediting your students."

But I said, "No. Every time we'd run an editorial, we would have a pro-war...A hawk, a dove and a mug war editorial."

And we made sure they were written by intelligent people. But anyway, the whole three years were fun. And one of the first students I remember other than the students that were for me and with me was Jim Hayes. But because my office was in the University Center, and Jim was always on campus. He worked longer and harder than any administrator or faculty on campus. He was always there. And I think this was...do you know what year his accident occurred?

**Rose**

Uhmm, we'd have to double-check 'cause he had rehab.

**Engel**

I knew he was 18.

**Rose**

What?

**Engel**

I knew he was 18.

**Rose**

Yeah, I can double-check.

**Estes**

Okay, because at that time, Jim had...his eyes were very sad. And he still fighting anger. But I remember he had the most beautiful eyes. His eyes were full of soul. And he would always be there. And I just kept saying, "John...Jim, did you ever go home?"

And I just have casual conversations with him. But he was determined that he was going to everything he could to be sure that every student who had any disability would have full-access to anything he wanted to do. And he simply was not going to let any stone go under. And he was determined to get all of the rocks. And he worked very closely with the athletes. He was the first person I remember being student government president. I don't know whether somebody else had been there before him, but that first year we weren't in the University Center. And I was in the music building and I'm not even sure where student government was. But anyway...But the time I was aware of him, he was president of the student body and he was taking it very seriously.

**Rose**

That's TCJC, right?

**Estes**

Uhm-hmm.

**Rose**

You said he was born in '49? As was Sam Province actually. So 1967. Yeah. '67. And then he transferred to UTA in 1971...fall 1971.

**Estes**

So he came the year after I did.



**Rose**

Yeah, in '60...I think he started in TCJC in '69. I'm double-checking it.

**Estes**

Well I'm sure there were others. But the others didn't make an impression on me. But I remember him there. And he...Dr. Clipwood was the director of Student Publications and he worked with Student Government. And he said, "You know, I get eight...from six to eight calls from Jim Hayes every night asking for advisor strategy."

And he said, "Sometimes he calls as late as eleven o'clock at night."

He said, "I don't know when he sleeps."

But we were worried about him because he's going to fail his classes if he doesn't stop obsessing so over trying to change the whole world.

**Rose**

So at TCJC, he was already really working on accessibility?

**Estes**

Yes!

**Rose**

Wow! Because that hasn't come up in any of the newspaper articles.

**Estes**

Well we didn't write about it. It was just like...you don't write about people who worked very hard every day and do their jobs well. You write about usually those who mess up or change jobs or something. And then...I made it a point that I would not ever be involved with any students. I tried not to have post-friendships or even enemies on the faculty again, for the credibility of the paper. So he was wonderful! I brought one black student. The first black student on *The Shorthorn* staff came with me from TCC. And they were the only two students I really knew. But I made a point. I'm not trying to be close friends with Jim Hayes, but I certainly believed in his cause. And the of course, I knew that he and John were friends. But John, I don't think.

**Dycus**

I didn't know him. Not really. Not anywhere near like it was later.

**Estes**

And then I don't know how long it took him to be employed. Do you know the year when he became employed as part of Student Affairs?

**Rose**

Uhhh...'74.

**Engel**

Yeah, that's the year he graduated.

**Rose**

I think it was...yeah I'm actually in his sister's oral history double-checking the timeline. I want to say...so he graduated in '73 or '74? And then he became...I think the office was officially set up in '74. The grant that would have funded Province's office. Or maybe funded the whole...his salary among other things...

**Estes**

Well I guess Sam...Sam got him started. I guess.

**Rose**

So tell me when you figured out...So Sam, John and Joseph Rowe...Joe Rowe...all show up in 1965. So Sam's and Rowe's parents probably met each other at what's now TIRR down in Houston because that's **how they probably met, probably** at that facility. And at least they were in the same circles. And Rowe finished his senior year of high school at Arlington. So they knew each other by then. But all four of them came. And I guess you would have known Joe Rowe partially because...

**Dycus**

He was in there.

**Rose**

He was in business.

**Dycus**

He was in the College of Business.

**Rose**

This was Province?

**Dycus**

Joe's mother and my mother were a lot alike.

**Rose**

Yeah. And I guess all three of your mothers.

## **Dycus**

Well Ms. Province...yeah. They were joined ideologically by...they each had this...quite involved son. And they were fiercely determined that their sons have all the opportunities, all the chances to do everything they can do. And so they overlapped. And the things they did for us: driving us and making us sure we got to class and things like that.

## **Estes**

Was it Sam that there was a protest about Cooper Street thing went well.

## **Rose**

There are a lot of Cooper Street protests. What we found is so...the first, we actually have the first article if we can find...

## **Dycus**

It's very difficult to determine exactly what Sam did.

## **Rose**

So the Handicapped Students Club was started by the three of them. But predominately by Sam and Jim. And then they started pushing. And we have the whole timeline in the exhibit.

## **Dycus**

So this is the first one I found was in 1968. Dr. Herman was involved in one of these protests as well.

## **Estes**

Uh-huh. And his mother was...I mean his wife...is still in my good prayers.

## **Rose**

Yeah, so basically they founded it. And then in 1969, the Texas Barriers Act was in effect. And so that's the state version of the federal Architectural Barriers Act in '68. Actually, it went into effect in early '70. We found nothing about other regions, but that's about it. Although we have gone through every year. And Alpha Phi Omega had wooden ramps at that point. They kept getting destroyed by emergency vehicles. And Province and the Handicapped Students Association renamed by then. By August 1970, he got the university to put in 30 concrete ramps. So we found that article in *The Dallas Morning News*. And then when Duke came, you came.

## **Estes**

I came from...

## **Rose**

Yeah, yeah, yeah. You come in and he came in before Jim Hayes. So there was already a Handicapped Students Association and some activism and Rowe was very involved afterwards in Dallas. Then Hayes kind of catalyzed, but Nedderman already knew. You know, there's actually a really funny story that Rowe told about Nedderman that basically...Rowe really

wanted to major in Physics or Engineering. And he'd been building rockets with his toes. And they were going through the roof of his garage occasionally. And Nedderman was on the panel for dean. He was the Dean of Engineering at that point. And they said he was too dangerous to have Rowe in the labs. And he end up entirely from majoring in Science or Engineering. So that's how he ended up.

**Estes**

You said if you were wondering how Stephen Hawkings...

**Rose**

What?

**Estes**

You were wondering how Stephen Hawkings had been...

**Rose**

Yeah, and he would have been the first 4.0 graduate at the College of Business. And both he and...and I don't know if this was true, but he and Sam were restricted to three classes each semester so that's why they were over there five years.

**Dycus**

I chose three classes.

**Rose**

Yeah, they were...Rowe was restricted.

**Dycus**

I think I did four once and I wasn't doing very good and drop one of them.

**Rose**

So there is sort of a whole lot that goes on before Hayes even shows up. And Garner was also at UTA and was working.

**Estes**

Garner got there before I was. I was there I think at least a whole year before Wayne.

**Rose**

Yeah, and then Wayne I think comes in February 1961? So a little before.



## **Estes**

Well I guess he must have come that first year, oh dear. He and I had been fighting [laughter] for the whole year.

## **Rose**

Yeah. I'm looking through the oral history. I'm not quoting dates, but I know he was at UTA for about six months or so. There's a nurse that basically told him, "You can't go to college."

## **Estes**

Well at first, you could see the anger and despair. And then when he got onto feeling a part of the campus, you could see the light coming on in his eyes, And of course, Jim wasn't a perfect human being. He wasn't good at picking wives or keeping them...and probably because of his obsessive work comment. And he might not have found people who were comfortable enough in themselves to deal with him. But it was sad watching him as he deteriorated physically. You could just see. You knew he was slipping away. And nobody could do anything because if he had been less obsessive, he could really belong there. But probably what's more important for him to live well and to make this big. Because what he did with the wheelchair basketball was just incredible.

## **Dycus**

Sure you folks have [heard] Jim was a...I told you this, was a quadriplegic who looked like a para. Quadriplegics are not supposed to be able to push a wheelchair to Austin or shoot baskets or run track. So Jim in that regard had a mental constitution that was second to none. And he just wheeled himself to do things that no other para could have done.

## **Estes**

Well I think...

## **Rose**

There was no other quad, right?

## **Estes and Dycus**

And that's quad.

## **Estes**

That's part of John. John is the best speller. He knows most grammar because he...it was easier for him to learn it than remember it than to go through a book. And before we simply got computers, you can tell that I rather talk about Jim because I know Joe so much better.

But when we first got computers, I knew we needed them because I had been going to the professional journalism meetings and I can tell that's what was happening. And I knew also that we couldn't have a daily newspaper 'til we can have a production in house. So I knew what we needed and I kind of had a plan on how to get started. But I thought, "There was no way John's gonna learn a computer."

And I kept dragging my feet and I've been meaning to tell John my concerns because he was so good at what he did. And I knew if I had to choose between technology and John, then I'd take John any day. And I finally, one day, I got somebody who could bring one to the campus. And of course, I'm sure he's seen a computer somewhere. But when John saw the possibilities, he was the first one to learn it. And he not only learned to operate it, but he learned to make repairs. And he would say, "Okay, I need some hands over here."

And some quad in the newsroom, who could barely walk in and out of the door and chew gum at the same time, would sit there. And with his hands and John's brain, they were repairing computers so that we could keep them all from moving because we always had more students than we had computers. And it turned out to be the most wonderful thing for John, but it was the biggest dilemma I had the whole time I was working. And there were a lot of dilemmas like sometimes they were every hour on the hour. But that was just...And other people on the staff had the same feeling that we can't do without John.

## **Dycus**

<topic>Estes's and Dycus's contributions to Student Publications</topic>

From the time I joined Student Publications to when we started using computers, the agent with the ballpoint pen with the left hand or right hand. And I was pretty good. I was supposed to edit with a pencil, but I didn't bend down hard enough. So I had to with a pen. And Dorothy still, I was told, was that Dorothy said that I couldn't work with a computer. I wouldn't be fast enough. Whatever. So I typed with my index finger on the left hand. And I got pretty good at that.

## **Estes**

He got very good. He still wasn't the fastest typist.

## **Dycus**

One of my regrets...I don't have a whole lot of regrets from those 28 years. But one of them is when I met one of our original Macintosh 10028K...10028K, in the Styrofoam box! I let it go back to inventory, back to storage. Dorothy was out of the country and I was in charge. That was one of my decisions and I would have given anything to have that back.

## **Rose**

Tell me about the TCJC. Do you remember what kinds of issues Jim Hayes was working on? I know this is going back like 50 years. [laughter]

## **Estes**

Well at...maybe it was just learning how to be a leader. Because he didn't have a lot of self-confidence at first. And I know he...and let's be clear. He probably wouldn't have admit this, but he nearly drove Cliff crazy. Because he just, he thought Cliff didn't have anything to do all day except answer his questions and helped him in whatever he needed help. And of course, that was part of what made him successful is that tenacity. And I used to laugh about it. But Cliff and I, then we were in a car pool. Many times we would have the same hours. But one or the other, I had to be there real early or real late. So we put in some long hours and he would, again going a lot back and forth, but he really admired Jim. To see him...you could see hime trying to think, "What am I gonna do for the rest of my life? How am I going...?"

'Cause he'd hadn't been very active physically.

## **Rose**

And he hadn't been a very good student, apparently. He went early to community college.

## **Estes**

And of course that was. They had more resources. I took a big pay cut to come to UTA. A big pay cut. I left a beautiful office, perfect furniture, everything I needed to come over here. And it was nothing, absolutely nothing. The walls looked like they had penicillin. There was so much fungus growing on them. But the students had the best attitude. And I'd tell you something, we don't displace needs writing up. So they got paid and painted it. And the next day, the chancellor was on campus and that was before I really knew him. And he walks in there and says it's so clean. And I guess they knew he was coming and I wasn't able to look good. And he said, "Well what looks like new paint right here."

And then the vice president...I didn't know you were supposed to get permission and that you really weren't supposed to do any construction or destruction on campus property. So, they said, "Well no one...I hadn't signed any work orders for paint. So there's no new paint."

And of course it was still wet. And one of the chancellors got a little bit of paint on coat. He told me later, "I'ma send you the cleaning bill."

But the students just gone out and bought paint with their own money and they needed a sink and they want to build a better dock room. So they, it was like over the Christmas holidays and this was in the basement of the University Center where the birthplace where John stayed the whole time I guess since he was still a student. And then the first time he was working as a staff, working as some professional staff member. And they worked on it and they were using it like you use a bowl. And they went to the paint store and they told them what to do. So they did ever step, sand it and let it dry. Of course it took a long time to dry because we didn't have a proper ventilation vent. And I'm sure all of us got brain damage from working down there with all of the fumes from the photography, the paint and all the other stuff did. And so finally, when we got up to the next to last step, and then they went to the store to say, "Now what is the final coat that we put on it to make it completely waterproof?"

The men gave them the wrong can. And they put it on and it just made up everything they had done. It's like three weeks of working. As soon as it would dry, they would put the next coat up. And they said a few choice words. And they went out and bought a six-pack of beer and drank it. And the next day, they were back and started all over again. And that sink was so well-built that when we moved down and they had to remodel, they had to bring in a special bulldozer to tear it down. They said they had never had anything.

## **Dycus**

One was a CAT bulldozer. It was really sturdy.

## **Estes**

Well it was just so well built. They didn't, they couldn't know it down any other way. And then we got ready to move ad we were trying to get the paper ready. We always, we never missed a

deadline. I mean, we had a paper that was eyes on the ground. We had a paper no matter what. And then the kids would come and sleep on the sofa. I knew they were there, but I wasn't supposed to know. And I wouldn't let them drive all the way to Fort Worth. So I'd much rather let them sleep on the couch illegally than get killed on the highway. So I kept writing memos saying, "We have to move."

And it would take us at least two days to put the first paper out, so we've got to move. But there were like 17 offices that had to be moved. And always when they do things in the old room, a party, we were always on the bottom, so we were a number of seventeen. And they couldn't move us 'till they moved the people out of the place we'd be moving in to. It was quite the domino theory.

So it got later and later and I wrote a new memo every day and nothing happened. And finally, I was in there tearing out my hair. And John said, "I know what we can do. We can move ourselves."

So they borrowed a...was that my idea?

## **Rose**

'Cause you didn't have to do any of it?

## **Estes**

It wasn't you. It was the kids 'cause it sure wasn't mine! They got a four-wheeled dolly and they hooked it up to John's wheelchair. And he had to use the elevator. He had to use to go up. He either had to be carried up the steps with a banister all the way to the boys' bathroom or he had to leave at five o'clock after the bookstore was pretty...'cause they locked the door. And I've seen so many times, I've seen them carry John. And I thought, "Oh dear God, they are gonna fall and be killed."

And the newspaper business...it just gets started at five o'clock every day because the kids have to go to class and then write the stories and edit it. So anyway, they got John up. We had to go through an elevator, we had to go through...

**Dycus**

Yeah, the day in question I'm pretty sure was in the middle of the day, right after lunch. I'm pretty sure I used the elevator.

**Estes**

You had to because by then, we didn't have that other elevator.

**Dycus**

I went out the back using the elevator where the docks are.

**Estes**

So then they got those chairs that had rollers on them and put typewriters on them...and then put all the typewriters on them. And they got the prettiest girl and oh, they were beautiful. And some of them were wearing high heels and then they just looked so pretty. I'm sure they kind of dressed up for something because they usually didn't dress to come to go to class. And they started out, and here's John with his wheelchair. And this looks like he's doing the movie. He was doing the movie, then he had a motorized wheelchair. And I got this call, "Dorothy, get those kids off the mall! Every newspaper in the town..."

There were already newspapers were already on **the way back**. Oh! And then I took them off and then the minute we had the grounds, people...we had trucks. We had everybody coming to move us.

## **Rose**

So basically, I'm getting, "I was going to move, drag stuff with a power chair. Didn't go over well?"

## **Estes**

So they just thought it looked pitiful because I thought it looked wonderful 'cause it just shows that you want something done, let the kids figure out how to do it.

## **Dycus**

Someone called Mr. Wetsel and said, "Dorothy, do you realize that there is a guy in a wheelchair pulling typewriters across the mall?"

That's what promoted him to call Dorothy. It just seemed the thing to do. There was no one else to do it.



