

## ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

**CASE NUMBER:** C14H-07-0011

**HLC DATE:** May 21, 2007, June 25, 2007 (postponed at request of the property owner), July 23, 2007 (postponed each month by the property owner)

**PC DATE:** January 28, 2008  
February 12, 2008

**APPLICANT:** Historic Landmark Commission

**HISTORIC NAME:** Kocurek Building

**WATERSHED:** Waller Creek

**ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE:** 511 West 41st Street

**ZONING FROM:** SF-3-NCCD

**TO:** NO-H-NCCD

**SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from Single Family Residence, Neighborhood Conservation (SF-3-NCCD) combining district to Neighborhood Office – Historic, Neighborhood Conservation (NO-H-NCCD) combining district zoning.

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION:** May 21, 2007: Initiated a historic zoning case. January 28, 2008: Recommended historic zoning. Vote: 7-0 (Rosato absent).

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** Recommended the proposed zoning change from single family residence, Neighborhood Conservation (SF-3-NCCD) combining district to Neighborhood Office – Historic, Neighborhood Conservation (NO-H-NCCD) combining district zoning. Vote: 8-0.

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The Kocurek Building is not listed as contributing structure to the Hyde Park National Register Historic District.

**CITY COUNCIL DATE:** March 20, 2008

**ORDINANCE READINGS:** 1<sup>ST</sup> 2<sup>ND</sup> 3<sup>RD</sup>

**ORDINANCE NUMBER:**

**CASE MANAGER:** Steve Sadowsky

**PHONE:** 974-6454

**NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION:** Hyde Park Neighborhood Association

**BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

**Architecture:**

The ca. 1922 store is a one-story rectangular-plan front-gabled stuccoed frame commercial building with a full-width flat parapet and a full-width flat-roofed independent porch on plain square wood posts and paired 1:1 fenestration. The date of the stucco is unknown.

The ca. 1900 house is a one-story rectangular-plan side-gabled frame dwelling, now converted to a duplex, with a full-width shed-roofed inset front porch on plain square wood posts, and a full-width shed-roofed rear addition; asbestos shingles clad much of the exterior of the house; 4:4 fenestration.

**Historical Associations:**

City directories and Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps indicate that neither building was on this site in 1921. The first indication of a building on this site is in the 1922 city directory, with a listing for Service Painting Company at 505 W. 41<sup>st</sup> Street, an address that does not appear again in city directories until 1959. It may be that the address refers to the store building, which does reflect 1920s fenestration, and is now known as 511-13 W. 41<sup>st</sup> Street; the 1922 directory does not indicate any buildings closer to Guadalupe Street from Avenue A on this side of the block. The first indication of a residential property on this site is in the late 1920s, and it is very likely that the house now known as 503 W. 41<sup>st</sup> Street was moved in from another (and unknown) location, as the style, porch, and window patterns indicate a structure much older than the provable 1920s date the buildings were on this site.

The house has been used as a rental unit for almost its entire existence on this site; and was converted to a duplex as early as 1933, but appears on the 1935 Sanborn map as a single-family dwelling. The 1961 Sanborn map clearly indicates that the house has been converted to a duplex and city directories from 1932-33 on show more than one family occupying the house.

The store building has housed cleaners and a variety of grocery stores, significant in the history and development of Hyde Park. In the mid-1970s, Willie Kocurek used the building as a store and warehouse for his gas station businesses, and then his law offices.

**PARCEL NO.:** 02190504160000

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** W 80.27 ft of Lot 30-32, Block 8, Hyde Park Addition 2

**ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT:** \$ 1,619.65 (non-residential)

**APPRAISED VALUE:** \$ 252,110.00 (Land: \$151,256; Structure: \$ 100,854.00)

**PRESENT USE:** Office / Duplex

**CONDITION:** Good

**PRESENT OWNER:**

Michael Little  
511 W. 41st Street  
Austin, TX 78751

**DATE BUILT:** ca. 1922

**ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS:** Multiple rear additions and the addition of stucco to the office building. The property owners are in the process of restoring the store building and the duplex to their original siding pursuant to a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Landmark Commission.

**ORIGINAL OWNER(S):** 511-513 - Bluebird Cleaners and W.L. Rhodes Grocery

503 - M.R. Miller

**OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS:** None.

**LOCATION MAP**

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511-513 WEST 41ST STREET



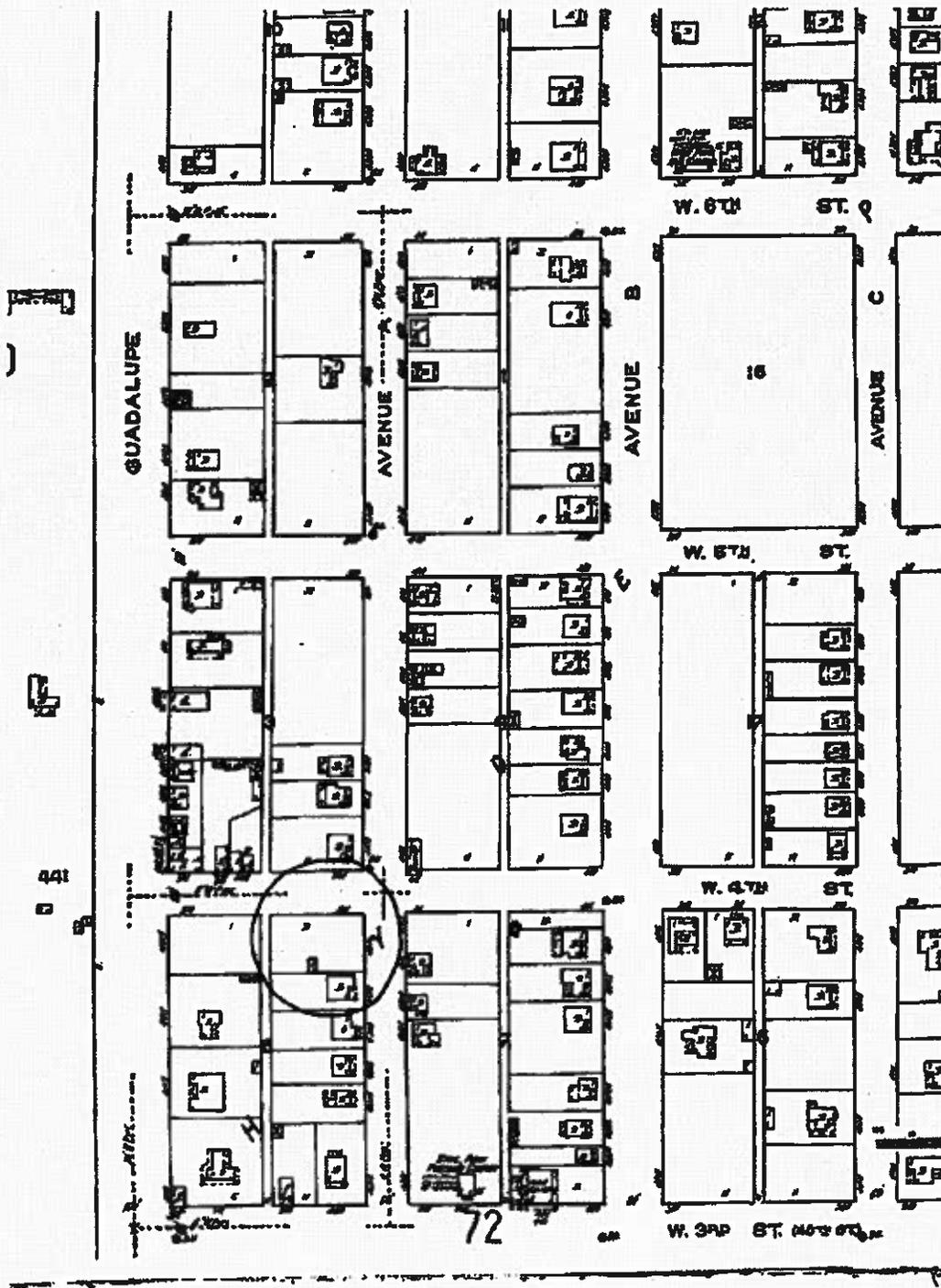
Office building

**503 WEST 41ST STREET**

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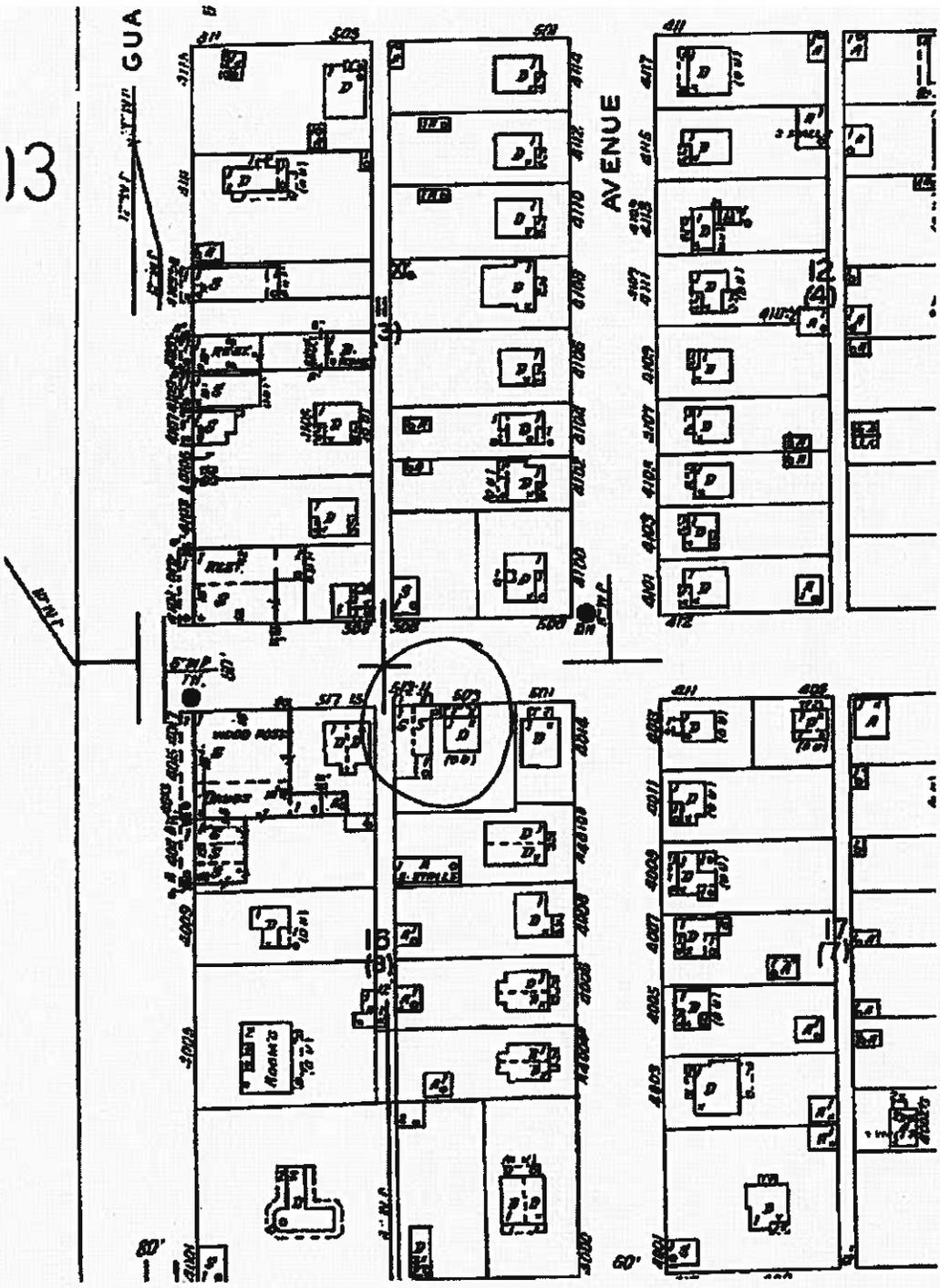


**Duplex**



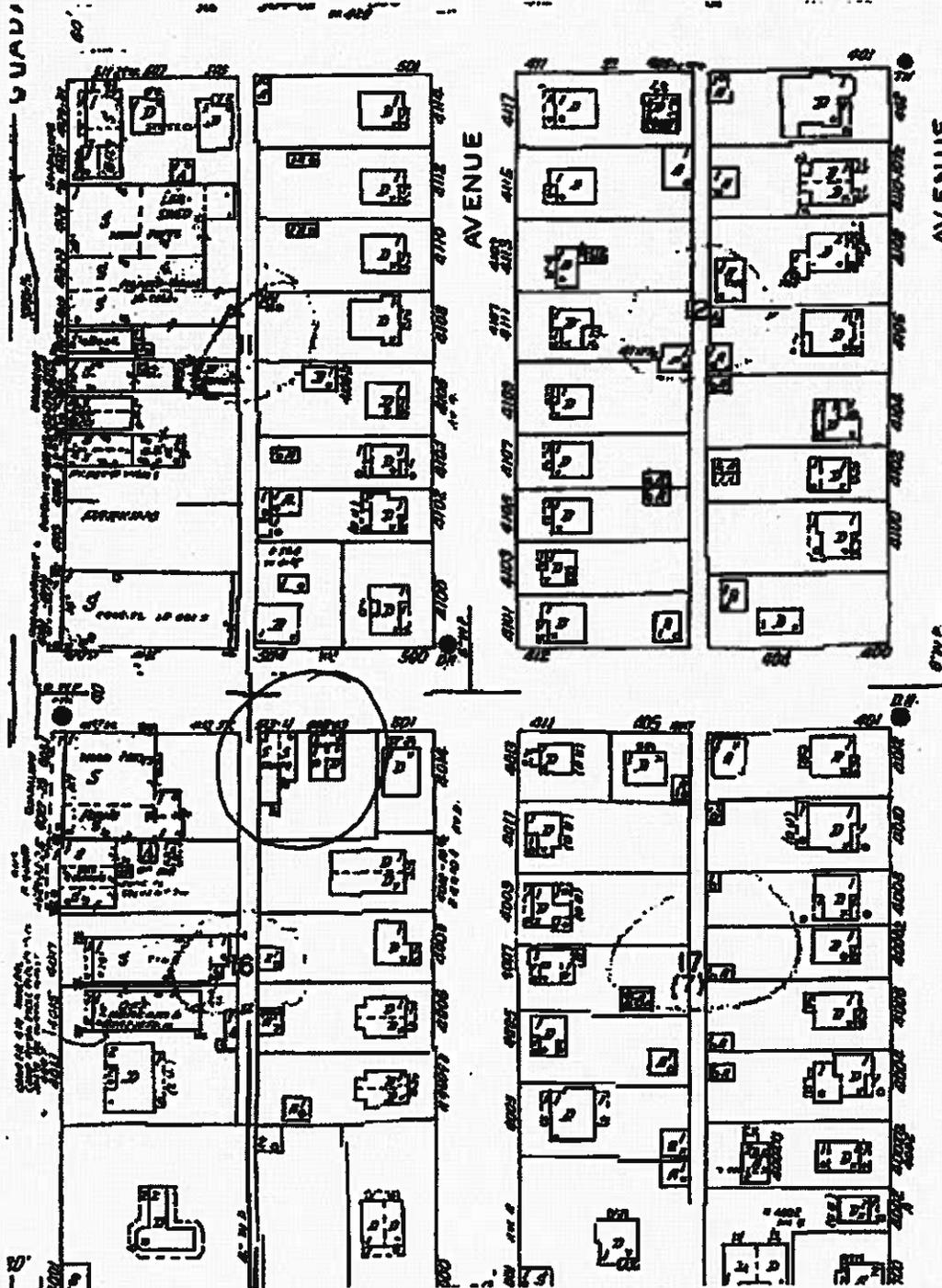
1921 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map – neither building appears.

13



1935 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map  
Shows both buildings in existence, but the house is shown as a single-family residence.

35-61



1961 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map  
Shows the house has been divided into a duplex.

5/07/07

## OCCUPANCY HISTORY - 503 WEST 41ST STREET

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City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
May, 2007

1976	Address not listed
1971	Leo Bach, owner No occupation listed
1965	503: Sam E. Slaughter, renter No occupation listed 505: Mrs. Carmel Harris, renter No occupation listed
1962	503: Sam E. Slaughter, renter No occupation listed 505: Mrs. Carmel Harris, renter No occupation listed
1959	503: Mrs. Maude A. Davis, renter No occupation listed 505: Mrs. Alice Dodson, renter No occupation listed
1955	503: Mrs. Maude A. Davis, renter Widow, Lawson Davis Helper, State Hospital 505: Mrs. Alice Dodson, renter Widow, W.O. Dodson No occupation listed
1952	503: Alice Dodson, renter No occupation listed
1949	503: Mrs. Sarah M. Hunt, renter Widow, Abel A. Hunt No occupation listed Mrs. Alice Dodson, renter Widow, William Dodson No occupation listed
1944-45	503: Mrs. Sarah Hunt, renter No occupation listed  Mrs. Alice Dodson, renter No occupation listed
1941	503: Horace W. Platt, renter Mrs. Matilda Johnson, renter
1940	503: Clifton C. Ellett, renter Mrs. Ethel Johnson, renter
1939	503: Clifton C. Ellett, renter F.D. Johnson, renter

1937	503:	Harry Cheney, renter A.C. Braddock, renter
1935	503:	W.W. Ferguson, renter W.D. Blount, renter
1932-33	503:	W.W. Ferguson, renter L.D. Anderson, renter
1930-31	503:	M.R. Miller, owner
1922	505:	Service Painting Company
1920		Addresses not listed.

## **OCCUPANCY HISTORY - 511 - 513 W. 41ST STREET**

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City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
May, 2007

1976	511:	Willie Kocurek Company warehouse
	513:	No return
1971	511:	Vacant
	513:	Vacant
1965	511:	Robert Sato, renter No occupation listed
	513:	Central Furniture
1962	511:	Dewey Crook, renter No occupation listed
	513:	Central Furniture
1959	511:	Joe J. Hoffman, renter No occupation listed
	513:	Vacant
1955	513:	Hyde Park Grocery (Mrs. Dorothy I. Stacy)
1952	511:	Ford's Furniture Store
	513:	Hyde Park Grocery
1949	511:	Ollie A. and Bula W. Sides, renters Ollie: No occupation listed Bula: Waitress, Austin State Hospital
	513:	Hyde Park Grocery
1944-45	511:	Ollie A. and Beulah Sides, renters Attendant, State Hospital
	513:	Hyde Park Grocery
1941	511:	Vacant
	513:	Hyde Park Grocery (Mrs. Dorothy Stacy)
1940	511:	Mrs. Florence Crawford, renter No occupation listed
	513:	Mrs. Dorothy J. Stacy Grocery
1939	511:	Mrs. Florence Crawford, renter No occupation listed
	513:	Mrs. D.J. Stacy Grocery
1937	511:	Mrs. Florence Crawford, renter

		No occupation listed
		Mrs. R.P. Horton, renter
		No occupation listed
	513:	O.N. Stacy
		No occupation listed
		Mrs. D.J. Stacy
		Grocery
1935	511:	Vacant
	513:	O.N. Stacy
		No occupation listed
		Mrs. D.J. Stacy
		Grocery
1932-33	511:	Bluebird Cleaners
	513:	J.K. Platt
		Grocery
1930-31	511:	Bluebird Cleaners
	513:	W.L. Rhodes
		Grocery
1922		Addresses not listed

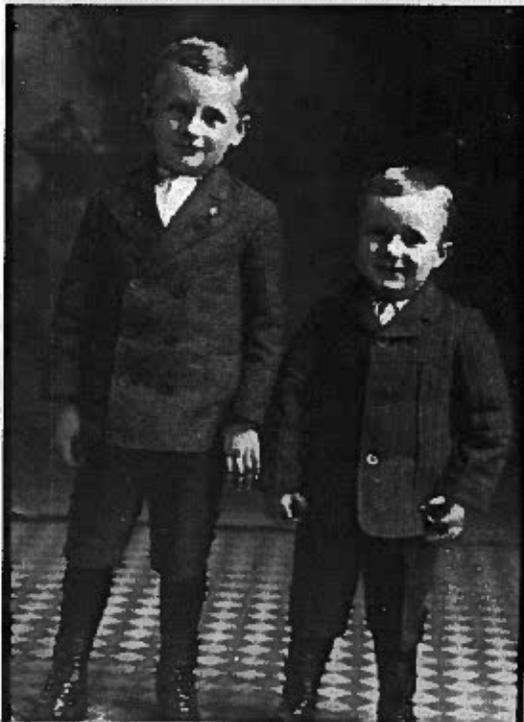
# *Willie and Maurine Kocurek*

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"Where there's a Willie, there's a way!"

**The indomitable spirit of Willie I. Kocurek is embodied in this willism. Born in Dime Box, Texas, Willie came to Austin in 1929 to study law. Some 51 years later he achieved that goal at the ripe young age of 70. What took him so long you might ask. He was busy!**



**Young Willie came from a family of nine brothers and sisters. Raised on a farm, Willie learned at an early age the meaning of hard work. He attended Caldwell High School and was valedictorian of his senior class. His high school English and debate teacher encouraged him to go to the University of Texas and helped**

him get a job working at a filling station to pay his way. He later purchased that filling station.

Willie earned his bachelor's in Business Administration in 1933 and soon after he met Maurine Gustafson at a dance he had been invited to by his filling station customers. Courting Maurine was complicated by the fact that she didn't have a telephone. Willie learned where she lived and the next day he bought a new white linen suit and a blue knit tie for \$5.00, borrowed a friend's car and headed to the address at 511 West 18th Street. Willie and Maurine dated for four years and in 1934 tied the knot. Together they ran the mom and pop company that was expanded to a department store which sold appliances as well as gasoline.

Willie and Maurine enjoyed their years in business watching it grow. The motto "You don't need money, just a little bit a month" became another familiar willism around Austin. The store originally covered an entire block at San Jacinto and 19th and later moved to 41st and Guadalupe until 1977 when the Kocureks decided to take "renewment" instead of retirement.

At renewal Willie finally went off to law school, something he had intended to do back in 1929. At the age of 70, after three years at the University of Texas Law School, Willie Kocurek became a Doctor of Jurisprudence. He was the oldest person to ever graduate from the UT School of Law, a feat that got him an invitation to appear on "Good Morning America".

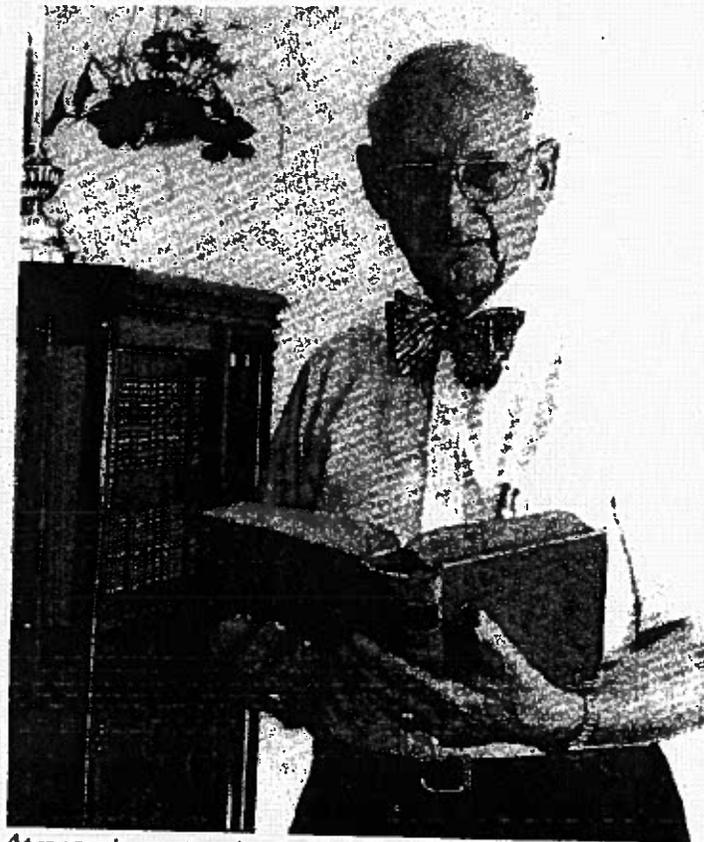
The Kocureks spent a lifetime in service to their community and have received recognition on numerous occasions. Willie was chosen as Austin's Most Outstanding Young Man in 1941, as Austin's Most Worthy Citizen in 1980 and in 1990 he and his son, Neal, were chosen as Austinites of the Year. His proudest day came in 1986 when an Austin elementary school was named after him. Willie I. Kocurek Elementary School is located in southwest Austin. He often refers to the school's students as his grandchildren. Maurine was honored in 1989 at Adult Services Council's Outstanding Citizen of the Year. She's also been active in the Lifetime Learning Institute, her PE.O. Chapter, Questors, Lions Ladies Luncheon and the Austin Czech Club, the Austin Woman's Club and her church, garden and sewing clubs.



**For forty years Willie donated much of his time to education in general and AISD specifically. When he ran for a position on the AISD School Board in 1946, Jake Pickle was his campaign manager and the campaign cost him \$25. He served for almost ten years as a school board member, the last four years as president. Then he went on to serve as president of the Texas Association of School Boards, director of the National Association of School Boards and on the board of directors of the Region XIII Education Service Center, and chairman of "Forming the Future" for AISD in 1982-1983. Willie was also named "Texas Hero for Children" in 1996.**

**The Kocureks have two children, Neal and Kay, three grandchildren, Jeffrey, Suzanne and Kelly and six great-grandchildren.**

**The faculty and staff at Kocurek Elementary are honored to have our school named for such a wonderful, caring and outstanding man.**



*At an age when most people retire, Willie Kocurek entered law school at The University of Texas, and became "the country's oldest young attorney."*



*An inveterate gardener, Kocurek has a spacious garden at home, two community plots, and a vegetable and flower garden at his law office.*

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Austin Homes & Gardens—January 1982

## Profile

BY PAT GOSSETT

# Willie Kocurek

*Austin's favorite pitchman and "oldest young attorney" has, at 70, more drive and energy than most people half his age*

**W**illie Kocurek — Austin's highly visible entrepreneur, salesman, auctioneer, and mover-and-shaker — reached his three score years and ten with a bang.

In April 1981, he received the Austin Board of Realtors coveted Most Worthy Citizen award. The mayor presented him with a plaque for distinguished service, and the mayor and city council issued a proclamation designating April 19 as "Willie Kocurek Day in Austin."

The following May, Kocurek became the oldest person ever to graduate from the University of Texas law school and pass the Texas state bar exam. This qualified him not only for membership in the State Bar of Texas, but also made him eligible for the Texas Young Lawyers Association, an organization whose members are ordinarily under 36 years of age.

When Kocurek attended his first state bar convention in Houston last July, he was unaware, when a Houston reporter interviewed him, that the Associated Press account of the "country's oldest young attorney" would be carried in newspapers throughout the United States and abroad.

The day the story appeared in *The New York Times*, he was contacted by producers of ABC's *Good Morning America*, and the following week, he made on that show his first network television appearance.

Willie Kocurek is a man of perpetual motion, perpetual energy, perpetual

\* Austin History Center ★ Austin Public Library

enthusiasm. He is known by most Austinites through the catchy slogans and commercials he ad-libbed for his appliance store. ("You don't need money — just a little bit a month," and "Where there's a Willie, there's a way.") But Kocurek, during the 50 years he spent in his own business, never allowed his professional interests to take precedence in his life. From the outset of his career, he has balanced business responsibilities with service to civic organizations and charitable causes.

Whether it be the Boys Club, Meals on Wheels, or public television, if there is a fund drive, you'll likely find Kocurek there, beating the drum for contributions as though his life depended on it.

Most Willie Kocurek watchers and friends have their favorite "Mr. K" stories. Usually these involve seeing Willie pop up on TV to plug a cause while they're having breakfast, hearing him promote something else on the car radio as they drive to work, finding him making an appeal at a luncheon at noon, then learning he is the featured speaker at a banquet they're attending that night. The man seems to be everywhere.

Many recall one KLRU fund drive some years ago, when he arrived at the studio to take his turn as auctioneer. Among things left to be sold was a three-foot-tall ceramic vase brought in from a railroad-salvage store, labeled by other auctioneers as "The Monstrosity."

*Whatever the worthy cause, if there is a fund drive, you'll likely find Kocurek there, beating the drum for contributions as though his life depended on it.*

When he was signaled to the stage, Kocurek grabbed the vase from the stack of other merchandise and strode forth, holding it proudly in the camera's view.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," he announced, "I just want you to notice the magnificent peacock painted on this vase. This is no ordinary bird, but one of great pride and beauty — painted through sheer inspiration.

"This peacock belongs in a beautiful hallway at the foot of a lovely staircase, where a man can greet it on his way out for his morning newspaper. He needs then to bid it farewell, turn to take one last look at it, and go out under the magnetic spell of its gaze."



"You must come in"

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"Every man needs a peacock, and this particular bird is one of the most remarkably beautiful peacocks I have had the good fortune to behold. It would certainly pain me to see this bird sold for a paltry sum."

Telephones lit up immediately, and Kocurek's peacock brought a higher price than a new mattress and box springs auctioned later.

Kocurek's natural bent toward salesmanship causes people to smile. Perhaps it's his courtly and picturesque speech, delivered with quick, staccato cadence in a no-nonsense voice. He means business, and his energetic appeals, spoken as though he were racing a stop watch, seldom fail to bring positive response.

He is aware of the colorful pitchman image he projects. It doesn't bother him, even though it often overshadows his many years of service to organizations such as the Austin Independent School District and the Austin and International Lions Clubs. He also remains an actively involved member of University Methodist Church.

*"You've got to move in this life," Kocurek says, "and keep on moving! Get off your hoe and dig it, if you please."*

"You've got to move in this life," he says, "and keep on moving! Get off your hoe and dig it, if you please. Life is an incredible thing which no one should just pass through. And every now and then you retire from one thing, and take a new direction — at least every 50 years or so."

It was this philosophy which caused Kocurek to walk away from a successful business in 1977 and enter law school at an age when most people retire. Immediately after graduation, he began renovating what he calls his "new old offices" on West 41st Street, where he hung up his shingle with two "fellow mature graduates," Bruce Young and Jerry Eichhorn, both retired military officers who were in his law class. "We have a combined age of 181 years," says Kocurek proudly.

Gardening is a consuming passion in his life. In addition to the spacious garden at his home, he tends two community garden plots on North Lamar, and also the vegetable and flower gardens of his new offices.

Says a friend from the Men's Garden Club of Austin, "Most of us can't figure out how he does it all. One day, one of our members told Willie he'd noticed a two-inch square of bare soil in his yard, and Willie turned in alarm and said, "Where?"

Kocurek spends a half hour in his home garden each morning before going to work. "First, you just go out and look," he explains. "If your eye is trained, you can see just which plants are misbehaving, which area needs water, and so forth. And while you're taking care of that, you can be planning whatever activities are on your mind.

"Then on mornings after a nice rain, maybe nothing needs to be done, so you just go out to say hello to the plants. And that's a most enjoyable thing."

When asked if he realizes that he has an uncommonly high energy level, he agreed that he does. He first noticed it as a youth, while plowing fields of the family farm outside Caldwell. He astonished his brothers by running instead of walking behind his plow. Kocurek believes people are born with different "energy circuits" and does not think this inborn trait can be changed or generated.

"Take the hummingbird," he says. "He has to eat every 45 minutes because of the incredible speed at which his wings move. And then there's all that flying backwards, his acrobatics, and so forth. Well, there are some people who are hummingbirds, some who are field larks, some doves and some hawks, and so on. And you can't make a hummingbird out of a field lark."

Does he consider himself a hummingbird? Kocurek seems pleased with this image, and delivers an ad-libbed 30-second promotion on characteristics and habits of the hummingbird, closing out right on cue. A fascinating transition has taken place during the process: The gentle voice of the gardener has become once again that of the auctioneer.

Kocurek's wife, Maurine, keeps a "Day Book" filled weeks in advance with activities and appointments, and for the most part the couple works as a team, attending the same functions, working for the same causes. Maurine is close to the hummingbird level herself.

Occasionally, you may find Willie Kocurek sitting quietly, in a pensive mood. But only occasionally. "There's so much more to life than routine," he says. "No one should allow anything to become routine. I said before that sometimes you need to retire from something and go in another direction. But I will never retire from life. I will renew life. Always." ☺

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MR. WILLIE KOCUREK  
May 22, 1979

Austin History Center ★ Austin Public Library

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

MR. WILLIE KOCUREK

May 22, 1979

SIDE A

Prud'homme: Today is May 22, 1979. I am Shirley Prud'homme, a member of Assistance League of Austin, and I am visiting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Willie Kocurek. This conversation is being taped for the Austin-Travis County Collection of the Austin Public Library. Ah-- How do you see Austin, Mr. Kocurek?

Kocurek: Shirley, I see Austin so--from so many points of view, that I'll just start from the time before I saw Austin, if I may say so, and tell a little bit about the times that, I think, prepared me to come to Austin. For example, we as children, all wanted to go to school somewhere. And I had the good fortune of having a teacher, an English teacher, in Caldwell High School that hoped I might get to go to school. We, at that time, had adverse economic conditions at home; and it was difficult to go to school because of money. But she said, "There will be ways and means, and I'd like to take you to Austin, and we'll find something for you to do there because you're capable of doing things" And she did. She and I came to Austin; and she through her friendship with other people here, was able to find a job that I've literally kept 'til today. I say that 'til today because we're now retired; but, until almost today. Now, this great English teacher Leigh Peck, Doctor Leigh Peck, was a psychology major, too; and was in educational psychology at the University of Texas. She introduced me to people that were of an oil company here, the Grayburg Oil Company. And I worked for them in one of their stations while I went to the University, at the beginning part; and then later that proceeded into my own station--on a sort of a commission basis. And then we went to Mobil, which really then was not Mobil but, Magnolia; and the Magnolia Petroleum Company through its petroleum facilities here in Austin, was my instrument of going to school, because it was the means of getting the money together to go to school. Mom and Pop came here to Austin, having had a big family and all of them gone, except two of us and both of us here at the University. The two young ones, I was next to the youngest, here at the University. They came up with us, and lived with us until much later at their death.

But that sort of introduces you to Austin from my point

of view, coming here early. I found so many wonderful things in Austin, among them the University; for example. Being a graduate of the School of Business Administration, and having been through it a long long time ago from 1929 until 1933, I came here fifty years ago to be a lawyer. And time sort of sometimes changes your course. So, when 1933 came up, and I had graduated from the School of Business Administration, at the University, and went down to register at the law school, I found that it was difficult for me to get my hours put together, and still work too, which I had to do. So I said, "Well, I'll postpone awhile, a year". But that year turned into ten years, truthfully. In the meantime, Maurine and I, Maurine Gustafson, my wife, and I were married--in 1934. And, children came along soon thereafter. Two years later, Neal was our first comer, and--three years after that Kay was our second comer. And so those responsibilities, and still in the midst of economic difficulty times; why, we just found it impossible to go to school. But came--forty three came, and I had not been taken into the military; I was a little older then, and had children. So, I said, "Well, I'll go, and go back to the law school." So Noble Prentics and I went back to law school. But, I had also made an application for the navy. And in the meantime, the navy called about the time I got the first three-fourths of a year done; why--the navy called. And so I had to go to the navy. And the result is, I didn't finish law school, here at the University. Now, someone asked me the other day how I was doing; and I said, "Well, I'm still in". And to me that's doing a whole lot, at this time to be still in. So, I'm still in law school. Now that's looking at it from the University point of view and my experience with the University.

But I met so many great people at the University by unique ways. For example, being in business here, those people were my friends in school; and they became my customers. And so I'm associated with people today that I went to school under--nearly fifty years ago, in fact, fifty years ago. So that's been an experience between the business life of Austin, the University life of Austin; and, of course, between me and those people that were related both to the business and the University life of Austin. I think that's a very interesting thing.

Then from the fact that we'd been to school here, and people had learned to know us, we became members of the Austin Independent School District Board of Education. In 1946, when I came back from the navy that I alluded to awhile ago--why, Walter Long and Fred Nagle were good friends of mine. Walter Long

with the chamber of commerce, and Fred Nagel, the president of the chamber of commerce, said they were looking for some potential person to be a school board member. And they passed by my place, and said, "There's a young man that would be a suitable school board member". And it was through their influence that I--was--that it was suggested that I become a school board member. So I did, and I served on the board of education for eight years. Four of those, 1950-1954, I served as chairman of the board. Now, looking at it from an Austin point of view, what were some of the problems? Austin, at that time just after the war, World War II, needed space in its schools badly; and so it was the big job of the school board and the powers that be of the school system to try to get space as quickly as possible. And during that time, we did a good survey of Austin; we also built a lot of new buildings for schools. We expanded from a one high school system to a four high school system during that period of time; but, we're now many more high schools than that. Austin has grown very rapidly from what was then a small number of students, in comparison, we're now just about sixty thousand students in the Austin Public Schools. So, from ten thousand, roughly, when we began to the sixty thousand now, is a great growth in that part, and I'm still associated with schools. Part of the business is, I served on the Texas Association of School Boards from 1946 until I went off the board of education; first as its president, when it was reorganized in 1946, and then as a member of the board continuing on. And I served on the national board of education; so that my springboard from the Austin, from the University, from the friends of the city, into the school system, into the national association, and to the--its board of directors was all a sequence of events in relation to the schools here. I got a lot out of it myself, but I feel like that it was a very interesting thing to do.

Casis school; for example, most everyone knows about Casis school. It's a place that was a cooperative job between the University of Texas and the Austin Independent School District so that we could have a place where the handicapped could have proper education--special education it was. And that building was built 'specially through cooperation with the University and the Austin Independent School District at the time that I was on the board. And we traveled to many good schools in the nation that already had that kind of plan, like the Kellogg School, where we saw such an operation and asked for ways and means to do it then from their example with things that they would redo and do differently if then were to have done then. So, we got some ideas that were placed right into

Casis school; and worked out to be a great school--all during the years. So, I've--I've dwelled on schools, but that's been an interesting part of my life.

Our children have gone through the University. Our son, a PhD. in electrical engineering, our daughter, a graduate of the school of education, and taught in the Spring Branch system afterwards; and lives in--Houston now. Her name is Kay Bell. Our son's name is Neal, Neal Kocurek. He's with Radian Corporation here as their executive vice president, and they're products of the Austin public schools and of the University of Texas and of additional information, and additional school work after the University of Texas right here in the University of Texas. Mrs. Kocurek, a product of Austin High. So we have three generations of Austin High in the family; Mrs. Kocurek, Maurine Gustafson, was her maiden name, an Austin High product; and our children, Neal and Kay, Austin High; and now we have Jeffry, who is Neal's son, in Austin High; and Kelly coming along, Suzanne coming along. They live in the Aus--present Austin High district; so, we feel like that we're Austin High folks. But--spread that all over Austin; you have a lot of--great schools in Austin.

I've also had some very interesting experiences through my church background in Austin. I came from the Catholic Church. Mrs. Kocurek's a Methodist; and when we were married; why, later on, I became a Methodist with her: first in the Grace Church in South Austin, then in the University United Methodist Church here at the campus--just at Twenty-fourth and Guadalupe. We learned to know Dr. Edmund Heinsohn. Dr. Heinsohn is a good reason for a person to have lived, I think, if you could just learn to know Dr. Heinsohn. There are a lot of great people in Austin because it's the Capitol, because it's--the University--has a lot of great people. But he, to me, is one--of--the--great ones. And--we had the privilege of being with Dr. Heinsohn and Mrs. Heinsohn aboard the SS France. We, in our small retail business in Austin, were tire people, too, along with appliance people; and we had the privilege of going to Michelin's international convention. And we invited--we had the privilege of two extra people to go--and we invited Dr. Heinsohn and Mrs. Heinsohn to go with us and our friends the Garretts, J. O. Garrett and Annette Garrett. We were all aboard the SS France for a week. And I said to many, and I say it still, that it was great to bask in the sunshine of that great person--for that full week. We met in the auditorium aboard ship one time, and that Sunday that we were aboard; and the first mate of the ship said, "Now we don't have a Protestant

minister aboard, so--we'll just sing some songs and have a social".

And I raised my hand up real high and said, "We do have a Protestant minister aboard," and introduced Dr. Heinsohn.

He nudged me and said, "When I get you off this ship, I'm going to drown you".

But he walked back and forth across the auditorium a few times, and his wife, Lollie, said, "He's preparing his sermon".

In the meantime, some other gracious person had volunteered his wife to sing; and she sang just gloriously. So--Dr. Heinsohn then gave his sermon, and he became a known person aboard ship when word got out of his ability. Because there on the spur of the moment, he gave the kind of a sermon that you know would have taken forever to prepare; and his life was in that sermon, I know. So, he's that kind of a person. And that University Methodist Church association, and it could have been any great church in Austin, I'm sure, because there are a lot of great people here. Those are interesting things.

Politically, we live close to the firing line so to speak, in Austin. We're here, seat of government, and all of us, I think, get to see, and know some of the people that are associated with government although we might not have been in ourselves. We get to see some of its shortcomings, and longcomings. We get to know governors as we pass along. And we, the, I'd say, non-political people or the apolitical people of the city have had that privilege too, as I have had, as I have gone along.

And then the Lions Club--like other good civic clubs has been close to my heart. And how does Austin fit into the Lions Club so far as I am concerned? Here in Austin, we have the Austin Founder Lions Club. That was the first one, and it was the first of all Lions Clubs throughout the nation. I think that's a very interesting thing. The Founders Club is the oldest Lions Club in the world. And through the Founder Club, we have the District Two S Three of Lions Eye Bank, here in Austin. So that we, through the Lions efforts, procure and disseminate the information that is to have--cornea transplants for people. And this is a very interesting thing. Sight conservation, you know is the thing that Lions do everywhere. And we do them here in Austin. So, I have been privileged to be a member of the Lions Club here in Austin, and I think it's--it's been a genuine privilege.

Now as we look at Austin from its growth point of view. We start back there in 1929 that I alluded to-- in the beginning of this little conversation-- and Austin was a small town. Austin was about thirty thousand people roughly, at that time. The University of Texas was seven thousand students; we now have over forty thousand. The campus was the--almost the original forty acres at that time. And in the center of the campus were the--were the original buildings of the campus. Then around the border of the campus--the barracks buildings of World War I that had been moved to the campus of the university-- Served as the classrooms, and I attended the--my physics class under Dr. Boner in one of those barracks type buildings. My physical education class was held in another of those barracks buildings. And--it might be interesting to note that--the law school building that I attended in 1943 very briefly, was at the corner of Twenty-first and Speedway. Batts Hall, I think the name was, and I attended there. And now Townes Hall, which is up on Twenty-sixth, West Twenty-sixth and Rio Grande, I am attending there as a student. And now they're building a new law building adjacent to the present one, and looks as though--I hope to be there another year, the Lord being willing; and I might get to attend in the new building--that is the new portion of Townes Hall. So, I will have been perhaps one of the only people who would have been a student in all three of the law school buildings that have been in Austin--for the last--the last--well since the university started--since there was a law school. I think that's a very interesting insight on Austin, and the privilege of living here.

Prud'homme: That is interesting. How do the students differ? Do the students differ?

Kocurek: The very interesting point to me is that--then, of course, were--we sort of--lived to a different dress style than we do today--attending the University. We sort of--semi-dressed, at least, to go to the University. Well now, you are--you don't think twice of the--or the kind of dress that a person wears at the University. And it is not so much so, now as it was in the sixties and seventies, but--today we still have jeans; for example, primarily in school, even in the graduate schools like the law school. There is a tremendous lot of that. The youngsters are just as great, though, as you can imagine. And they have been quite willing to accept, and be friends with, and encouraging to, an older person like I've been with them. So-- in fact, I've performed in "Assault and Flattery", which is a satire that the law school puts on each year. And I've enjoyed that, and the youngsters and I got along just swell. So it's fun--it's fun. It's fun. And fun is

a--maybe poor word to use for a description, because it pushes me pretty hard now and then. So maybe that part of it isn't fun. But--the whole package is very nice, and very interesting and challenging.

Prud'homme: I should think so.

Kocurek: Going back to Austin for just a moment, and saying that we started here when there was about thirty thousand people; well today, we have roughly three hundred and fifty thousand. Three hundred and fifty thousand. You drive from the far north to the far south of Austin, and it's a long way in between. We are a metropolis now. And I enjoy reading Audray Bateman's contributions to both the Austin newspapers, the Austin American-Statesman and the Austin Citizen, about Austin a long time ago. Just recently, she ra.... One of her articles was run in the paper. And it indicated that Congress Avenue was one of the beautiful streets. And the particular writer at that time said, "It is a beautiful street." Said, "Even with its mud," and says, "with a little bit of work on it, the vista that you see, looking up at the Capitol from down at the river, is quite something". Well now, you go look at the vista from down Congress Avenue toward the Capitol, and from the Capitol toward the University. And then you go out to the west where--roads now--you can go anywhere to the far west of Austin, and look down on the city. The city is a vast array of beautiful lights. It's a vast array of--beautiful geographic formation--looking down upon it from those tall hills. We were just up there recently--with a group attending the First Methodist Church party incidentally--where they were preparing for their play which they put on annually--at the first church. And--they were raising funds incidentally to put that play on. Well we were there, and from Mr.--ah--I'll think of his name in a moment. But from his home, we could look down upon the city from a sight that's just unbelievably great. I was privileged to be up there and enjoy it. We used to go to Mount Bonnell a long time ago. Mount Bonnell is still here and you can go there still and look down on the city from Mount Bonnell. It used to be sort of a rendezvous for the--for the young folk of Austin; and Maurine and I, Mrs. Kocurek now, and I have been up on Mount Bonnell and enjoyed looking down on the city.

I told Cactus Pryor a long time ago when he and I had an interview on his--on the radio--that I remember Dillingham's Pasture. He said, "Tell me about Dillingham's Pasture--as it related to Austin", and I told him. It was a place just out on I.H. 35 now. How shall I identify where it is. I simply say that--as you go out on I.H. 35, then to the west side of I.H. 35, about six

miles now, out of the city--on the left is where Dillingham's Pasture was; and it had a nice big area, very pretty, a lot of trees and everything, and Mr. Dillingham was a very friendly person. He had a horse there, and he rode the pasture at night, and he welcomed all the students to come out there for their picnics and parties. And they did. They came to that pasture, and it was a lovely place to come. And I want to say that I was one of the people at the University of Texas who had the privilege of attending the festivities at Dillingham's Pasture. We don't have that kind--quite that kind of thing today for the students, I'm sure, to go to--except maybe FIJI Island out at the lake. That's kind of a rendezvous that's far out.

And the lakes brings up another part of what's Austin like. I'll bet you love the lake area. Well, it's a sweet place. All the lake area is. Beautiful. Very interesting.

And the lake area reminds me of our festival each year--on--on Lake Austin. The Austin Ethnic History Association was formed for the Bicentennial. That's an interesting thing. Beverly Sheffield who was the commissioner for the Bicentennial for Austin had been to Washington, and he came back, and I saw him on the street one day. And he said, "By the way, I was in Washington, and they are anxious for as much of the ethnic nature of each of our cities and our states to be historically recorded, and--perhaps during the Bicentennial some functions to be performed that would indicate that ethnicity". And he talked with me about it and suggested that maybe we could form something like that in Austin, and I thought we could. And he said, "Well let's get together". And we got some people together--in 19--in late 1974, and in '75 we prepared our first folk festival, preparatory to 1976 for the Bicentennial. And then we had the Bicentennial Folk Festival, and we still have that folk festival. We call it the Austin Folk Festival--put on by the Austin Ethnic History Association with the assistance of Parks and Recreation, the Parks and Recreation....

Prud'homme: Tell me what it's like.

Kocurek: All right. The Bicentennial celebration, I think was one of the very nice things that--and we are performing it much the same way now. But, we have all the different ethnic groups, as much as we can have them in their own costumes, and they have prepared their own food; and they bring it there for you to come and buy and enjoy. And then we have two stages now, one then--one in the beginning, for a performance of the folk dances and all of the--of the enjoyable ritual entertainment that

the various ethnic groups put on. This year we call our--our pin that we presell the--a passport. It's a passport to all the nations of the world literally speaking. So, I say that for a dollar, you can see the whole world right down on Festival Beach at Fiesta Gardens; because, we'll have all the ethnic groups there with their food, their performances, their entertainment on two stages, and their--their costumes and garbs, showing you what it's like in many instances back home--how they look. So here we--all American people are recreating historically those places whence we came. And I think that's a very nice thing to do. But it also does this: It gets us better acquainted with all of the ethnic groups of Austin and Travis County, and something about their history and something about their--their coming here. We also have in the Austin-Travis County Collection a collection of the memorabilia of the various ethnic groups, and we display that--those artifacts and memorabilia, and historical inter--and historically interesting things at the Fiesta Gardens. There's a nice place there now. The room itself is air conditioned. It's a vice big room, and in that room we'll have all the various displays of the things that are interesting about the different ethnic groups. They themselves, the groups themselves, get that together and bring it there for their display; and we encourage them to do so. So, on the whole, I think that's a nice thing.

Another thing that comes out of the Austin Ethnic History Association and the Austin Parks and Recreation Department besides the Folk Festival is an essay contest that we now have in the elementary schools. The junior historians write essays about their ancestors, about their forefathers, and about their immediate family. And they try to make family trees. And we have prizes for the best contributions from the different schools. And this year we have a book of about a hundred pages just now completed that we have put together of those winning essays from each one of those schools. We had a party at the new parks and recreation department auditorium which is the old navy--armory down on Barton Springs Road, a very nice auditorium in there; and we had the place jammed full of young people and their mothers and dads and their friends to come and recieve the certificates for each of the children. They got two certificates each: one for being the winning essay, and the other from the city of Austin Parks and Recreation Department for the same purpose, and you never saw such gleaming eyes and delighted people as those were to recieve two awards for the--for the best essays in the various schools.

And then another thing from the Austin Ethnic History

Association we hope will be eventually some type of museum, perhaps in the Austin-Travis County Collection, in the old library, that will be representative of all of these things that I've talked about and many more. And with the type of leadership that we have in there as we had with Katherine Hart before, and as we have with Audray Bateman now, as we have with all of the helpers that she has including you, Shirley, and including May Schmidt. May Schmidt works with us in the Austin Ethnic History Association's connection with the folk festival, and with the Travis--with the Austin Ethnic History Association. So we are very close to the Austin-Travis County Collection. I think that's a --really great thing.

Sort of pause here for breath, and reminisce. I'm a gardner, and Austin is blessed with a fine gardening situation that most people may or may not be acquainted with. But here the Men's Garden Club is one of the big garden clubs. And we have two or three dozen other garden clubs, and they put on good shows each year as does the Men's Garden Club. And a person who has been a hobbieist gardening all of his life, as I have been, finds the connection that Austin affords through Parks and Recreation Department, through the Men's Garden Club, and through all the other garden clubs, and through Ted Fisher, who is our--our ornamental horticulturist. He's a part of A. and M. University, you know. You can have all the direction and guidance that you want in almost anything that you want to do in Austin. Our Parks and Recreation Department is beautifully operated in my opinion. A little bit of history there, the Austin Founder Lions Club was instrumental in getting--the person originally to come here to Austin and survey the possibility of a parks and recreation department. And that person was--what was Jimmy's name? You may tell me in a moment, but I will think of it. And he came here and helped organize the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, and it's grown from that to what it is now.

And when--on the school board, we had Mr. Jac Gubbels to do a survey for the need for the schools for the next twenty-five years. Jac Gubbels saw the need to incorporate the plans for parks, and he had much to do with the present areas for parks by putting it into that survey in 1946 which was a survey forecasting the growth of Austin from '46 to 1966.

Prud'homme: How did that--? Did it work out, this forecast?

Kocurek: If one were to go go back now and look at that--go to the library and look up that survey, he'd find that it amazingly agrees with Jac Gubbels concepts of what Austin would be like in sixty-six. And you can

imagine what it would--what he would have said it would be like in seventy-six, and in eighty-six by simply going, now driving, over it and reviewing it for yourself. It's hindsight now, but his foresight was amazingly correct, and I think he did a--a--great job.

Prud'homme: Well, what you're saying is that he was instrumental in--things like--at Highland Park School, the Perry Playground on the school--. It's a joint thing between the city and the schools.

Kocurek: That--that in part. Yes. More than that. For example, Shoal Creek. The space that was left there. He felt that that space should be kept inviolate. That it should not only be that area, but the other belt, Waterloo Park, which is now on the east side of the Capitol; for example, that's Waller Creek. It--it would have--it would pay....

SIDE B

Prud'homme: Tell me something about your philosophy of education.

Kocurek: I think to start with, we need to go back to our very young days when the people who immigrated here. Our people were Czechoslovakian people, and there they weren't privileged so much to get an education, as in many other countries. They weren't privileged to get an education because only the people that were in the leadership positions, in the moneyed positions could get an education. And our people were very strong in feeling that we should go to school. For example, though we had farm chores to do, our folks insisted that we go to school and we do our farm chores after we got out of school, and when school was over. And so I think the philosophy of our folks carried over into this thing that became a total program, and we have to go back to Thomas Jefferson, and that was before our time, of course, in Texas; but Thomas Jefferson wanted an education for everybody, so they could intellig--intelligently become a part of a democratic sort of government. And I think that's very important. Now, the next matter is, how much of an education do we all have to have? From a formal education point of view, to do the things that society requires. If not all of us are outfitted to be college degree prospects. It was the feeling for a long time that everybody, their mothers and dads especially, wanted their children especially to go on to college because they would have college degree training and would have a much better income as a result. Well, now, that sometimes isn't true; because many times, if the same effort were applied in the learning of a trade: to be a good tradesman, a good plumber, a good painter, a good

carpenter, a good machinist or a good--craftsman of any kind. A much more needed thing today a lot of times than some of the other things that we might have trained for, if we did train for a specialty in school. So, is a formal education the kind of thing that everybody has to have; or do you become educated in the job of being a good plumber or a good painter or a good carpenter or a good machinist by doing so many other things besides going to a formal school? Working as apprentice like we did a long time ago. Do we have to eventually come back to that in order to have enough people to do those jobs too? I don't really know the answer. But I do know this. When I read in the paper the other day about the usual commencement exercises that are given when the person--claims to the people that you've worked hard for the last many years now; and you're out of school; and you've done a wonderful job; and hereafter it'll be easier for you; and you'll have a good income as a result of having been to college and having got your degree, and so forth. But he said, "Really, I want you to know this, that those were m--, those were the times--the free times of freedom for you. Now you're getting in the times of regimentation. You've got to now learn to make that money instead of the money coming from somewhere else. You've got to be the one, that when you write a paper for the business that you're working from, it's going to be graded by how well it does for your company. And it has to be right, or if it isn't right, soon enough your place is taken by somebody else, and there won't be any excuses for your not holding the job that you have cut yourself out to do; because, your efforts have got to do that. So the hard knocks come a lot of times after school, and--I think, I agree with that fellow's philosophy. I think that hard knocks come after school. And we need to be prepared to do the job. Hard work associated to doing the chores that we need to keep society running. We have a university here with forty--forty-one thousand approximately people in it. And we have universities all over Texas with a lot of people in them. And a lot of those people will--be properly trained to do the job, and they will have gone in there with the interest and effort that they have to put in, to do a good job in their particular field. There'll be many of them that when they get out don't find their places. It's difficult afterwards to find their places in society, and they may not do a total job as a result of--just having got an education. So, maybe they have to somehow or other start over into something else. A good friend of mine in Brenham, Texas; for example, is a graduate of a university, and he mows the shoulders of the highway. He owns three great big mowing rigs, and he rents those--he--rents those to the highway department, and he has people who run them for him. And he makes good money out

of them, and that's a summertime more or less occupation. You know what he does in the winter? He's learning go be a good plumber. And he's working at plumbing with a good friend of his in order to be a good plumber. O.K., he's a graduate of a university. He has a business that he owns which is mowing for the highway department. He might be doing any one of other things that's comparable to that in a mechanical sort of way, and he's training himself now to be a good plumber.

Reminds me of the story about the plumber who came and did the job at the house for the attorney. And the attorney, when he was presented with the bill, says "My", says, "I don't get that much for the law work that I do."

And he says, "Well, when I was a lawyer, I didn't either".

And so the man who is training himself to be a plumber is doing something that's essential for society to continue. We've got to do all those things. And we've need to have a little more, I think, respect for the kind of work that we do in the crafts, so that we do a good job; and we're proud of it. We need to retrain ourselves to the masters point of view that we had a long long time ago when a man finished a job, he was proud of it; because, he had built the Capitol here in Austin; and he was able to hue the stones and put them into place; and make a beautiful edifice afterwards. It took craftsmen to do that, while the training of those craftsmen is very important, and the work that they do afterwards is very important. That is school too, you know. That's certainly education. I think we have to have a mixed package of education.

Prud'homme: You think the vocational program in the public schools then is of value?

Kocurek: That's one way to achieve what I'm talking about. It may not do everything. I think private enterprise has to train, even after vocational school work's done; but it gives the basics and it gives the starting point. And I also think it gives what I mentioned in the beginning, a choice of things to do for the person that isn't going to be a professional, but who needs training to do a thing well. And then the vocational school can give that training to do a thing well. And that thing can be all of the expertise that we need in doing the jobs that are necessary to run a society; from the typist in an office, the secretary in an office, to the mechanical crafts that I mentioned--several times just now in the conversation. I do. I believe that we need to

have the mechanical training in schools through the things that we do now. And--and do them well.

Prud'homme: Well, do you think that the schools are doing a poorer job now, than they were in the past?

Kocurek: Having been a school board member, and thinking of the responsibilities we had when perhaps there was less problem in society than there has been in the last two decades. And the problem in society is another whole ball of wax. For example, we had the rebellious nature of the situation during the sixties, when conforming to--the usual social behaviors was just passé. People fought the battle of the social revolution almost in the sixties. Well, thinking of that from the school point of view, it's pretty hard to run a school system. For the last several years, it's been pretty hard to run a school system. And with the laws that we have enacted that makes discipline difficult, how do we discipline today? We have to become experts in the behavior of people, and in handling the behavior of people. So, I think our schools are good with what problems we've had confronting them. And I think, we perhaps have to rethink that whole structure and do the job differently from what we've been doing it, and not have as much top-heaviness perhaps, as we have in everything. We have the bureaucratic tendency. And the top-heaviness in the bureaucratic tendency comes from never anything dying or passing away or passing out of the picture, but adding to it. If a thing has become less needed than it was ten years ago, we still retain it and add to it the thing that is needed; and we wind up with two bureaucratic situations instead of one; or we wind up with three, instead of one.

Prud'homme: You must have seen this in business.

Kocurek: It is in business. Business is a--is a frightening thing, if I may say so and be forgiven. We used to do business pretty much as we saw it. Now--we can be violating some of the tenets of--of the law in running a business, and never know it. How does one small business, like Mrs. Kocurek and I had, run, and know all the facets of credit; for example, and all the facets of--of extending that credit so that you don't discriminate against anybody? How do you collect your accounts without stepping on toes; for example, that can be legally--offensive? It's so many controls, and we wind up with it being too difficult to operate. So we've got to be--we've got to recognize the fact that business has to have a climate in which to run. I'm a little bit of a deceptive trade practices person to this extent. We, in the deceptive trade practice law--act, find that you have to pay triple

damages for any deceptiveness in trade whether you knew about it or whether it was intended or not. O.K., that means to say that they are likely to be looking for those things to put you in jeopardy, and so you've got to be super careful to not do it and to steer clear of all of the pitfalls of business from that point of view. So, it's too much of a ball of wax for one little outfit to do. So, either you've got to be a one man outfit, that's a cobbler on the corner, if he still exists, and there're very few cobblers on the corners left. Or you've got to be--an individual perhaps running a very very small one man fix-it shop. After that you've got to become big enough to have expertise in all the areas that you need. I look at Seven-Eleven as a good example of that. Seven-Eleven's got seven thousand stores, I think it is now. One of the biggest outfits in the country. Well, they can have their accountants, their lawyers, their--their training schools, their--their personnel supervision and selection; and they can pay the price for it. They're big. They can pay the price for it. They can read all the laws, and they can interpret all the laws, and they can do them. Well, but it does eliminate the probability of you owning a Seven-Eleven type store on a corner, and competing with them because you can't do all those things by yourself. So what do you do? You work for them. That's the best thing for you to do. And it doesn't mean to say that you don't do well working for them. But that thing that all of us over the years have wanted to do, be in business for ourselves, is a little more difficult, I think, to achieve today than it ever was. In our business, we enjoyed it. We enjoyed business in Austin. Austin was a good climate for us to have our business in. We were a small business from beginning to end. We served just about fifty years--in business in Austin, and during that period of time it wasn't uncommon for the radio when you turned it on to hear one of the radio spots that we did about our product. And we went about like this:

"This is Willie Kocurek. Want to tell you about something new in our store. It's the finest kind of range that you've ever seen. It's a Magic Chef. And do you know that my mother was such a great cook that she could literally be the thermostat of that range. She could turn it off at exactly the right time even though it had wood burning in it then. Now it has gas. It's so easy to do. So you don't have to be the cook that Mamma was. But you can have equally a good cooking as Mamma did, if you buy your range from Willie Kocurek, where you don't need money, just a little bit a month. And where there is a Willie, there is a way."

Now, that was the kind of a spot, not exactly maybe, as we would have made. And that same thing we did on television ourselves. O.K., so, we became known by everybody virtually in Austin. For a very small business to become acquainted with most everyone in Austin is what business seeks to do. How do you do it? With some uniqueness, with some special ability, with some particular application that you do a better job than anybody else does in the kind of product that you sell. That's what being in business for yourself is all about. When it becomes super difficult to do that, then you simply can't "cut the mustard", so to speak; and you have to work for somebody else. And so you lose that incentive and that ingenuity and that privilege that you would be so apt to have if you could do it for yourself. The do it yourself business, the mom and pop store, if you please, and they say the mom and pop stores are gone now, they virtually are. But for you to work--twenty hours a day wasn't uncommon, but you didn't know you were working. You were literally playing, you know. What you like to do is play if you look at it from that point of view, so you were literally playing, so the hours didn't mean anything. Now, if you work a forty hour week and you watch the clock, there isn't any fun in that. You somehow or other got to have fun in what you do. What do you think about that, Shirley?

Prud'homme: Well, I think it's obviously been--been your philosophy--from the very beginning. You must add that in your--in your television commercials, you've always had a bow tie. You're always dressed up.

Kocurek: Yeah, and by the way, Mrs. K. makes those bow ties. We call Maurine, my wife, Mrs. K. It was very common for her to be referred to as Mrs. K., because, I was referred to as Mr. K, and in the adds I said, "Mr. K. says, 'You don't need money, just a little bit a month'"; for example. Well, the bow tie became a part of me, and when I did a commercial on Quasar; for example, was a brand of television, I did a commercial on Quasar, the color television; why, I said, "Quasar, and Willie Kocurek and bow ties go together". Well, truthfully, they did, because the ad about the merchandise and the appearance of the person and wearing of the bow tie that Mrs. K. made, I think, all--all went together. So it was--it was a very interesting thing.

Talking about business, you know, sometime you have to quit, just like the conversation that you and I are having on this tape, it's going to quit. But when that time comes, if you've been as close to business, as we were, it becomes a very traumatic thing for you to quit. That's why a lot of times, when people retire,

they unwind, and the machine quits running. It's not very long after retirement a lot of times, that people who seemingly were healthy, are gone. Now, I didn't realize how traumatic it was to cease doing something you had been doing every day for fifty years, and doing on your own as we were with our business. And so you try to preserve something of that, and you want to keep it running if you can. You'd like to--for it to run forever. In this case; why, I preserved some of the--some of the business itself. The sign, for example. I have the sign. I have a place that I store it. I have a little place over on Forty-first Street, where I have it stored in the back yard at the place. Well, why would I do that? That's the emotional part of the attachment to the business. You don't want to destroy that personality. You don't want to have it cease and die, if you please, so you keep some of the derelicts, if they are that. Some of the--some of the things that are associated with it, the sign being one and little odds and ends; and, of course, everybody gathers the pictures of time and the memories of time that's past. And business does that, too. And Austin, and that little business fit together.

So we started this thing by asking the question, what is your opinion of Austin? The opinion of Austin, is a big ball of wax. It's a lot of things put together. It's the people who live here, for example. We have people that in letters to the editor will say they like Austin because; and they'll enumerate the friendliness of the people, they'll enumerate their joys in the symphony and in all the entertainment of a cultural nature that Austin possesses. We'll have people who are coming here with a great big business, that before they come, investigate to be sure that the H.D. people, that they have working for them in their highly technical businesses will have the kind of entertainment that that kind of folk like to have--or the kind of recreation that that kind of folk has and wants. O.K. Austin furnishes all of that today; evidenced by IBM being here and by TI being here and by others coming here regularly that we see reports about, and Austin furnishes that. Couldn't come accidentally without a lot of forethought on the part of a lot of people, and among them, I think Walter Long was one of the great exponents. Walter Long was the executive secretary of the Chamber of Commerce for a lot of years. Vic Mathias who followed him has also done a wonderful job. But they put things together to create a future Austin, and they were just a drop in the bucket. It was all of us who put things together to make Austin the kind of a place you want to live. When you finished the University, what would you most like to do? You'd like to live in Austin.

and do whatever it is you've prepared yourself for, right here in Austin. You can't absorb all of those people in Austin. No way. So the few that get to stay, are very happy about it. And they get to stay in unique ways. For example, we got to stay, because we were already in business. And we just continued that same little business having finished the University. I was on South Congress Avenue. Our business was at 1007 South Congress. It was a--. We sold Mobil products, and we sold tires and things for the automobile. And Fred Miller was a friend of mine who had a station right down at First and Congress; and he, talking to some of the people that traded there with him about our business in general, he said, "Well, there's a graduate of the University running a filling station right up on the hill at 1007 South Congress". He said, "I can't understand anybody that'd do that". That, after all, is what I tried to say about education awhile ago. You can have your training, but you'll do whatever you're in the groove with, a lot of the times, and I've enjoyed my experience in Austin. And I'm still enjoying it.

- Prud'homme: That's just great. Well you were active in South Austin. Tell me a little bit about South Austin, and it's growth.
- Kocurek: Yes, I told you about our business being at 1007 South Congress. That was in 1936. We were there from 1936 until 1944 when I went to the navy. But South Austin, at the time that we went out there, was a very small part of Austin. We'd grown then to maybe eighty thousand, a little less than that-- in the seventies by thirty-six; and then during the war we had grown until we were nearly a hundred thousand in 1946. But South Austin, because we had one bridge going across the river; and it was the Congress Avenue bridge; and we had the Montopolis bridge. And for a long time that bridge was out because it washed out one time. So that we had no cross--no ways to cross the river to amount to anything, and the result was, it simply kept South Austin small.

But, I was president of the South Austin Civic Club in 1941. We had--the installation of officers party in Becker School which is an elementary school. And we held it in the hall. And the hall was just big enough about to have the tables in, let alone to have any passageway to walk past the tables; and we sat on only one side of the tables for the banquet in order to have the other side for the accessibility in order to get back and forth. And we delivered our--our little talks right there in that hallway. Well, you can imagine what it sounded like to the far left and the far right. But it was

the spirit of the people puttin' things together and making South Austin grow, and they did. And South Austin today is just about as big as North Austin. If you want to experiment, drive from the river--south in almost any direction: southwest, southeast, straight ahead south, and it'll go forever before you're to the end of things out there. And big business is big business out there now, with the shopping centers and all of that. And this has happened in my time in Austin. Congress Avenue was unpaved--South Congress Avenue was unpaved when I came here, and that's not so awfully long ago, you know, fifty years ago. So times--Austin has moved fast, and I'm glad I've been a part of it.

I had the privilege of--of working with so many different institutions here, during the lifetime, so that I feel like school and university and government and civic enterprise and chambers of commerce, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, for example. I was not directly in the Junior Chamber of Commerce, but at that time I knew all the Junior Chamber of Commerce people, and I was a member of the senior Chamber of Commerce, because I was in business. And--I--in 1941. And may I say this very modestly. In 1941, I was chosen Austin's Most Outstanding Young Man. Well, 1941 is the time that I've spoken of a whole lot here in our conversation. And a lot of things were taking place in Austin at that time, and because I was a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and because I was in business, and because I had graduated from the University, and because I was associated with people in business as well as around the university campus, it gave me an entree; and it gave me a chance to know people. And because we were enthusiastic and energetic, it was--it probably led to the choice for that year, of me being Austin's Most Outstanding Young Man. Austin entered into that. Austin made that possible.

Prud'homme: --?--

Kocurek: We recently were at a banquet that the--the --Delta Kappa Phi, (that might be incorrect, but that's just about right) which is the professional fraternity for educators. And they choose a person from the lay, from the non-professional educator group each year to--and they give their award--. It's called the James Umstadd Award. And because we were on the Thirteenth Education Service Center, and because we had served with the Austin Public Schools, and because we had been on the state school--the Texas Association of School Boards, and on the national board, and because we were associated almost all of our lifetime in Austin somehow or other with schools,

well, they gave that lay award to us this year; and we were honored on that occasion at the Joe E. Thompson Center at the University. So that you can't live among this kind of a great thing, and not enjoy its fruits. And those were the fruits, having worked with it. Having the privilege to enjoy some of the things that happened as a result of it. We were very proud of that, Mrs. Kocurek and I both. One of the sweet ladies, afterwards--I had mentioned the fact that she and I were delighted that we were chosen that night. Well, the award was given to me. But the lady said, "I'm so glad you included her, because most often, it's both of you that do the work." And it is. I've said that I was the only freshman in law school with a private secretary, and she truthfully, did a lot--did all my typing for me, for example. Well, when you type your papers and everything, that's a whole lot of work, and that's a great help to have that--that work--here at home--done for you. So she is very good at that. And she's been a part of our business all the time too. When we closed our business, just this--end of the last year, that is. Well, for example, we had our accounts still to collect. And we had some things still to do. Well, Mrs. Kocurek does all that while I go to school and while I garden, and while I do some of the other chores that both of us put together do. It's better made--it's made a great team. She is a native Austin person incidentally. Maurine Gustafson. She was born in Austin. And if you check--. I don't know what percentage you'd find to be native Austin People now with our nearly four hundred--nearly thousand people, but the percentage would be very small.

Prud'homme: It really is. We talked--. We've talked about your civic activities, and your church activities and all these things and I had mentioned earlier as we were talking. I met a man who'd done these same kinds of things--all his life, and felt that it had been wasted, because the needs were all still there. What's your thinking on this? How do you feel about all these things you've done all these years?

Kocurek: Having done these things all your life, and then the needs are still there was the philosophy of the person you just mentioned. I can see what he is saying. It also reminds you of the fact that you wash your face, and you have to do it again and again and again, because you--because it gets dirty again, so to speak. Or you eat your food, and you have to eat some more food and some more food and some more food down the road because you use up all that food; so I don't know whether we'll ever stop up all of the places in which we work, and find them so--so perfected that you don't do those things a second time that they don't have to be done. Somehow or other the

evolution of cycles, we say that there are seven year things or there're five year things, or there are ten year things. Well, we've sort of developed those--those philosophies, as we have gone along. Those droughts occur every seven years, for example. Or that cold, super cold spells come ever so often in numbers of years. So I believe that while he worked a whole lifetime at doing civic things, and doing the things that he felt were needed for society, he wasn't able to get to all the newcomers to society. There's no way, because they're always coming; and so we do the same things over and over and over again in order to acquaint everybody who comes into that society with it some more, so to speak. And do we need to do that or don't we need to do that. I think would be each individual's thing to answer. But I think we would find ourselves prone to go right in and do our part and chip in and carry the load.

We had a person who came to speak at the Lions Club, and I mention the Lions Club, because I'm a member. It could be any one of the great clubs. And he said, "You know, there isn't a reason, in my opinion, now, for the continuation--" And he was a member of another civic club, and one of its state officers. But he said, "Government does so many things now that it isn't--there isn't the need for civic clubs that we used to have; and for that reason, they'll die out. The young people are not going to become members of civic clubs". Well, I'm sorry to say that the club today doesn't have as many young people in it as I would like to see because it's likelihood of continuing is dependent upon having young people; but the last two or three years, I have noticed, that our club is beginning to generate young people into its membership. They're coming in. I think we're getting over the hump from that point of view--of not having a reason for young people to want to be members. For that reason, I think we're going to still have the job to do that we've been doing for the last fifty years. And to answer your person's philosophy....