

Dr. Woodrow Wilson Baldwin

Une Vie Extraordinaire



What was largely unknown then, and still is, deserves to come to the public's interest, even their gratitude. As the story unearths Baldwin's scientific, personal, and most of all social contributions, the captivated reader wonders how it could be that so much of his and his friends' lives were stifled to such a degree.

Lawrence R. Peterson

Who the Hell is Woody Baldwin?



More Than You Ever Wanted to Know About Woody Baldwin

Woody Baldwin was born to tough pioneer conditions in the northern Texas panhandle. He grew up poor, in the midst of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. The strengths developed from childhood led to a distinguished academic career. He taught as an Assistant Professor at University of California Los Angeles and as Professor and Department Chairman at Simmons College in Boston. He spent 37 years of shared life with his long term partner, made significant contributions to society and founded the Prime Timers organization.

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“The time has come,” the Walrus said,
“To talk of many things:
Of shoes and ships and sealing-wax
of cabbages and kings,
and why the sea is boiling hot
and whether pigs have wings.”

Lewis Carroll

(from *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, 1872)

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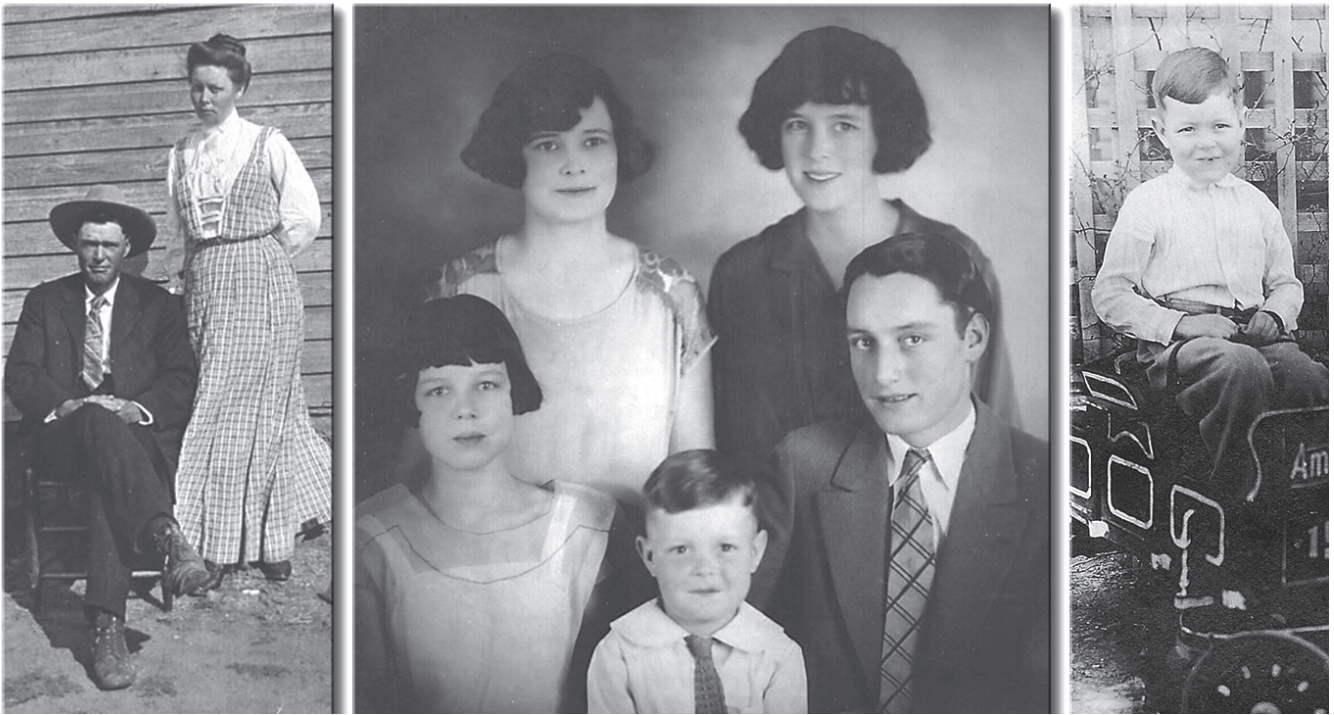
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Dr. Woodrow Wilson (Woody) Baldwin



“I was taught by my mother to not have prejudices and to this day, I don’t.”



The Early Years

BEGINNINGS

WOODROW WILSON BALDWIN was born to tough pioneer conditions in the still newly settled northern Texas panhandle. He grew up poor, in the midst of the Depression and the Dust Bowl. The strengths developed from this character-building childhood led to a distinguished academic career and significant social contributions in his retirement. He taught for ten years as an Assistant Professor at UCLA and for 26 years as Professor, and Department Chair, at Simmons College, a prestigious northeastern university. Upon his retirement, as a natural extension of his life, he founded the Prime Timers organization which now has over 70 chapters world wide. The scope of this biographical sketch is merely Woody Baldwin's early years, his youth, academic and retirement years, and the shared life with his long term partner. This sketch can not attempt to provide a detailed history of Baldwin's founding of Prime Timers, and the growth since it's inception, which is a project in itself. Hopefully this paper will give the reader some insight into the hero of the story, known affectionately as "Woody."

We begin with a few names, as a way to place the young boy "Woodrow" within the context of the 1920s. The surname "Baldwin" was relatively new to the northern panhandle of Texas. We do know that Woodrow's mother, Emma Leora (Ledea) Gray was born in 1884 and came to Texas from Tennessee. His father, Claude Horace Baldwin, was born in 1882 and moved to Texas

from Georgia. Both parents left school at the end of their elementary grades to work on their respective family and neighbors farms. The availability of work and a life of their own may be what drove each of them further West. They met in Blue Ridge, Texas (about 41 miles northeast of Dallas) and were married there on April 1, 1900. They lived the first 7 years of their marriage there, giving birth to two of the children. They lived in Lockney, Texas for a time, and several other locations, giving birth to three additional children. It was not uncommon for pioneer farmers to start families when they were still very young and to raise a large family. Woodrow believes they moved around so much because, although his father was a farmer, he was not a very good one. Census records show that about 35% of Americans in the 1920s were considered full-time farmers.

As to how he came to be named Woodrow Wilson he comments: “I guess my parents just ran out of originality in naming their kids. My older siblings are named, Vada [Germanic meaning “famous ruler”], Zada [Arabic meaning “prosperous or increasing”, Obert [Germanic meaning “famous for his inheritance” and Leora [Hebrew meaning “my light”].” From the interviews with Woodrow apparently his mother finally put her foot down on the biblical names and insisted on something more modern for her fifth child. Woodrow further comments; “I guess my parents admired President Woodrow Wilson although I never heard it discussed. I teased my mother that I could never lie about my age because I was born in the last year of his presidency.” Prior to 1912 the name would have been unrecognized. Of the most Popular 1000 Names of 1920, from Social Security card applications for births that occurred in the United States, the name Woodrow ranked 67th. Woodrow Wilson is consistently ranked as one of the top ten American Presidents. One can only speculate what Woodrow’s parents admired most about this president. Perhaps it was because he declared the first National Mother’s Day in 1914? During his childhood the name Woodrow was used by his family and his peers, but his mother always called him “Sonny.”

Woodrow claims to know very little about his grandparents. One must assume they were farmers too. The maternal grandparents are buried in Blue Ridge, Texas. Woodrow’s paternal grandparents are buried in Lockney, Texas. We know very little about that branch of the family. Lockney, Texas, is still a small rural community — near Lubbock.

As far as where Woodrow’s ancestors came from, he comments;

I don’t know (nor find it important) what nationality I am. It is not as important in Texas as it is in other parts of the country. When I grew up, there were Mexicans, blacks (they were politely called “Negros” in those days), Jews, Catholics and Christians. Beyond that,



nothing else mattered. I was taught by my mother to not have prejudices and to this day, I don't.

To put his birth in context one needs to look at the events of the year 1920. This is the year Prohibition began, and the year a woman's right to vote was passed. In Europe, Hitler presented his National Socialist agenda in Munich and in Geneva the first meeting of the League of Nations was held. In New York the infamous Wall Street bombing occurred in front of J.P Morgan, which killed 38 and injured 400. The underlying causes of the Great Depression were gathering momentum, and would soon coincide with the disaster of the Dust Bowl.

One can also look at things we take for granted today and which did not exist when he was born. At a Christmas party, in his later years, Woodrow surprised the young children of his hosts when he noted that he grew up before Scotch Tape existed. It was only invented in 1930. He had to explain to the children how one wrapped Christmas packages with white glue and string. It may be noted he grew up before bubblegum (1928), the Yo-Yo (1929), and even Penicillin (approved by the FDA in 1928) and frozen foods (1929). Traffic lights were only invented the year he was born, the first being in Detroit, Michigan, and not ubiquitous in the US for many years. Woodrow Wilson Baldwin was born before nuclear bombs. In Amarillo Texas in the 1920's and 1930's they didn't lock the doors of their homes and as children were never bothered with many of the fears placed upon the lives of the youngsters of today.



THE EARLY YEARS

Woodrow Wilson Baldwin was born in Dumas, Texas on March 28, 1920. The man who developed the town was named Louis Dumas and the town, formed in the late 1800's, was his namesake. The panhandle was one of the last areas of the State of Texas to be developed from the raw prairie. In the late 1800s the great migration westward was still ongoing, and this generation of early settlers encountered very difficult conditions. The town was given little chance to survive, but the pioneers were hardy stock and they stuck it out. What began as a dusty crossroads on the prairie beneath the "big blue sky" and above the Canadian River, north and west of Amarillo began to grow. The small village of Dumas' population was only 571 persons in the 1920's.

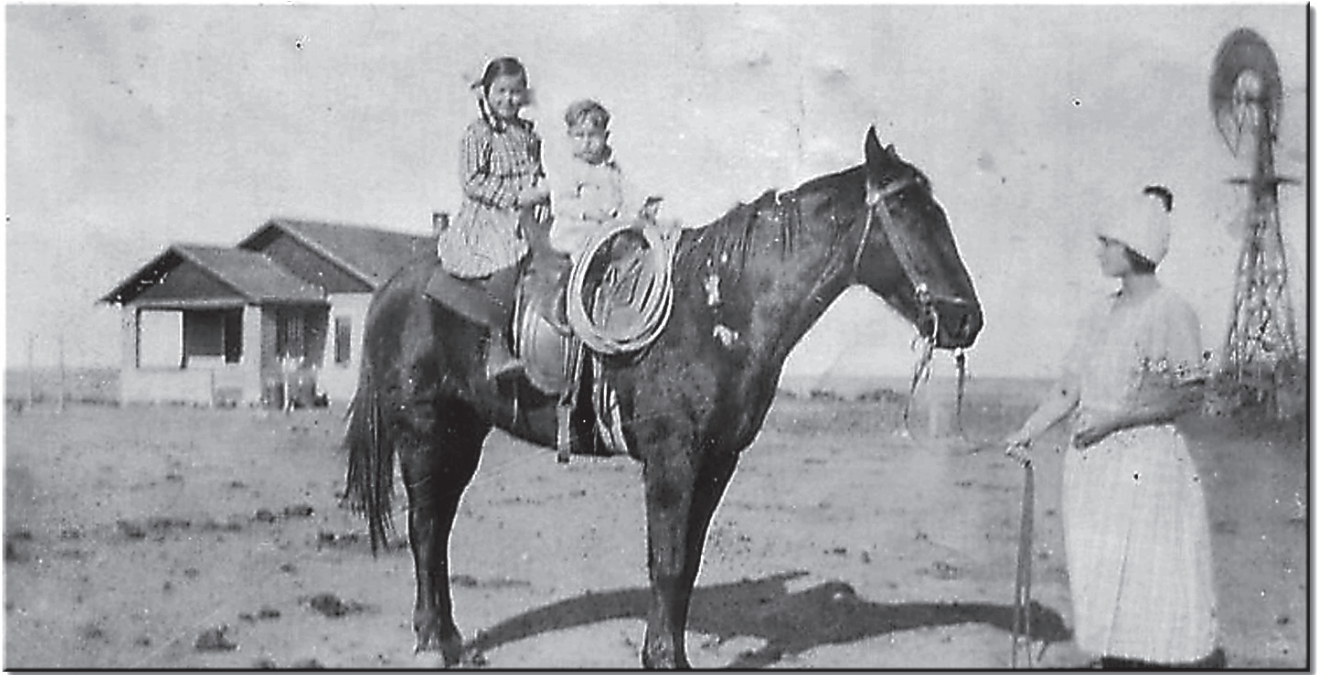
At Woodrow's birth, his mother was 36 and his father 38. Woodrow was the fifth child, with 18 years separating him from the oldest sister. He was born 16 months after World War I ended. His father did not serve in WW I, having been exempted by being a farmer. At the age of three, Woodrow says, "I talked the family into moving to Amarillo, where it might be possible to have

indoor plumbing.” In truth the farm was a disaster for the family. The land was incapable of producing a crop to support a family of five and his father was not a very good farmer to start with. The farm also lacked electricity. As a note of interest, Woodrow said he returned to the farm many years later and found the land occupied by 37 oil wells. On moving into town his father began work for a farm implement company (John Deere), beginning in 1923 in Amarillo, a town of about 22,000 people at that time. His mother was mainly a housewife, although the responsibilities in those times were more time consuming than in the modern day. Woodrow stayed in Amarillo until he was 20, and the population was up to 61,450. The family stayed on in the Amarillo area until Woodrow’s mother died in 1966.

The only sibling that Woodrow actually grew up with was his sister Leora who was 6 years older than he. The three other siblings were married, gone and beginning their own families by the time he was 5. Woodrow describes himself as a, “brat of a brother and I don’t know why my sister did not kill me.” He says there was enough difference in ages that they had little in common and fought constantly. Because of that, usually, when one of them was spanked the other one got it also. He wonders if sometimes one would start a fight simply because it gave them such pleasure to see their mother discipline the other one. After Leora left home to go into nurses training, she and Woodrow became closer and closer until in their later years they were not only siblings, but best friends. He now says, “I got along fine with the older ones, but maybe that was because they didn’t have to live with me.”

“I loved them all. There was 18 years difference between my oldest sister and myself, so I was an uncle at 4 (although that nephew was killed in World War II) and a great uncle at 21.” All Woodrow’s siblings are dead, of course. Vada died in 1983, Leora in 1984, Obert in 1997 and Zada 1998. He has also outlived the oldest niece and two nephews. When Woody was asked the question, “What one word would you use to describe your life?” he answered “Lucky!” He says “We were poor, but full of love. I always say my friend “up there” must like me because I have been so lucky in life.” He has retained this humble demeanor his entire life.

To quote Woodrow again; “As I look back, “poor” meant a lot but I was too young to know that (thank goodness). I never had more than one pair of shoes at a time and they were worn until the toes wore out from my kicking cans.” His brother Obert bought him the first pair of long pants and his sister Leora bought the first two-piece underwear. Here the author of this sketch must digress again to define the times. When interviewing him for this sketch I, the author, jokingly asked him if the first underwear were boxers or briefs. Of course I didn’t realize he grew up before the introduction of the “Jockey” brief, in 1935. Even the two-piece underwear referred to was a new concept. Prior to



that, underclothing for boys and men was a single union-suit style, with long legs and sleeves for winter and short for summer. In this decade, companies also began selling buttonless drawers fitted with an elastic waistband. These were the first boxer shorts, which were named for their resemblance to the shorts worn by professional fighters. My jokingly asked question forced me to remember again that he is 89 years old at the time of this writing and grew up in a world very different than my youth, and even more different than today's world, where children accept the Internet as always available and Band-aids as something existing since the beginning of time.

His sister Leora was instrumental in getting him new pants when he went through puberty as the pants, that he'd had for years, were inadequate for his growth. Woody remembers Leora telling his mother that Woody "had to have some pants that fit!" He continued, in the same vein, "I guess I had changes of shirts, underwear, socks, but not many." They were very poor and hard-working, to the point that simple needs like clothing were often overlooked. One must remember textiles were still expensive compared to wages. Clothing was not abundantly available. No "Ross Dress for Less" stores or Costco or discount outlets. Although they were poor in material wealth he says they never went hungry. Even if the meal was just a mush of beans with some corn bread, there was plenty.

Woodrow learned the values of work at a young age and those values served him well throughout his entire life. His mother was quite a gardener

and had grown a huge bed of petunias. She would bundle them in newspaper, and young Woodrow would go from door to door selling them (at 12 plants for 5 cents). He remembers making \$9.80 one summer from the flowers. Also he sold Liberty, Physical Culture and True Story magazines door to door. From the magazines, Woody made 27 cents a week. That was high finance for a 9 or 10 year old kid in those days. He doesn't remember ever reading those magazines and claims, as a youth, he wasn't much of a reader. Still later, when he was 13, he worked full time (8 hours a day) at the Tenth Street Drug Store in Amarillo making 25 cents per hour and was going to school full time. He said during the interviews for this writing: "I can't imagine now how I did it but I was young and we needed the money." He maintained this job for many years while attending school full time. Woody throughout his life defines himself by being a hard worker, proud of his efforts to rise above adversity, and gives credit to the early years of "hardship" for molding this ethic.

Woodrow's family were Southern Baptists so they were not allowed to dance, have playing cards in the house or wear "skimpy" swim suits in public, etc. He was not allowed to see movies because his mother had the belief that they were somehow sinful. He only saw his first movie at the age of 16 years old, the 1936 "Whoppie" with Eddie Kantor. As a child he could not play in the yard-sprinklers with the other children during the summer heat because dressing down to shorts was considered sinful. He never learned to swim for the same reason and although he took 7 courses in later years, 3 university and 4 red cross, he still can't swim. But he adds he has learned how to dance and even though he can now gamble without fear, he worked too hard to make the money and doesn't want to lose control of it by gambling with it.

The Baldwins were in the heart of the Bible belt, so religion was something one had to have; mostly from family pressure. At the church young Woodrow did participate in the plays and keeps a photo from his six year's old "Tom Thumb Wedding" role. A non-speaking part. He was in the church chorus but was required to "sing" at the lowest volume possible. Woody claims to have never had any musical talent. When he was in grade school, they did an operetta every year and he says his singing was so bad the teacher told him just to move his lips. Woody refers to himself as the original "Johnny One Note."

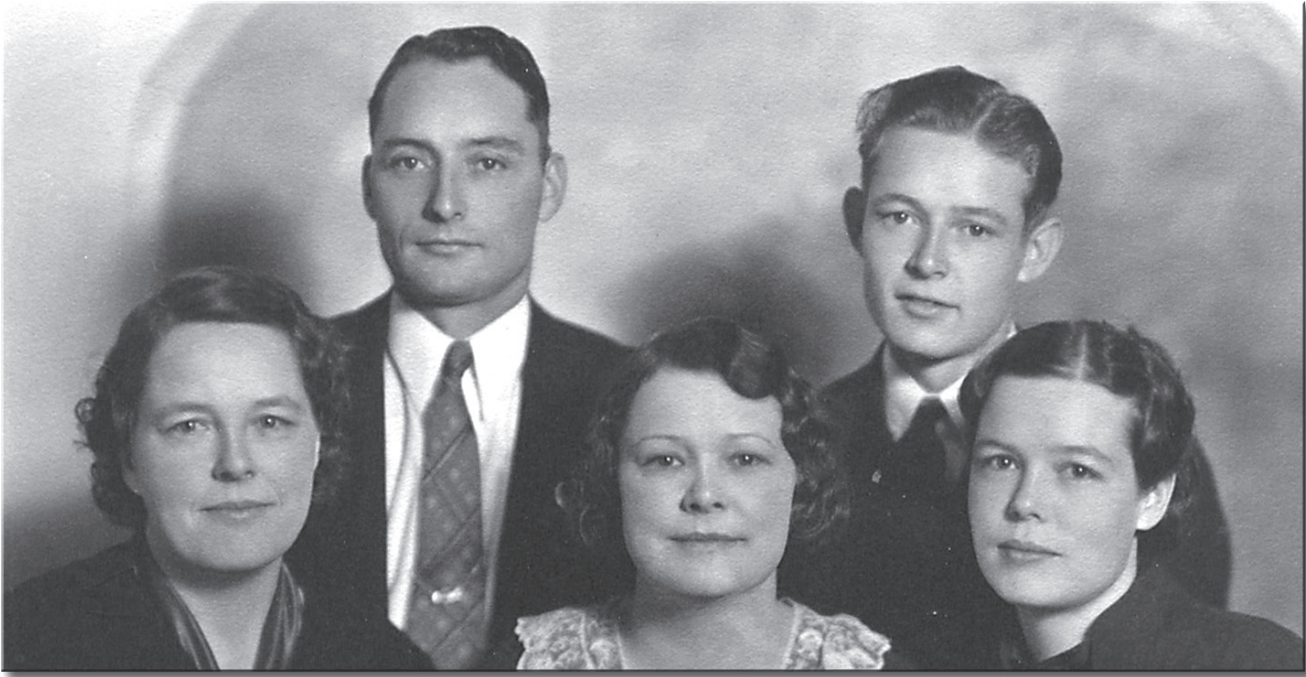
Although the transmission of TV and radio signals began in the year of his birth, 1920, it did not reach broad public usage till later. He remembers the first time he heard radio at a neighbors house when he was six or seven years old. In those day the radios did not have speakers. One listened through headphones. That evening the big event was the world's heavyweight title fight between defending champion Jack Dempsey and challenger Gene Tunney. Held at the Sesquicentennial Municipal Stadium on September 23, 1926 in Philadelphia. Tunney won, and to this day, boxing fans argue whether Dempsey could or





should have won the fight. TV did not enter into commercial availability till during the Second World War.

In later years, as movies were more available to him, Woodrow had his first “crush” — on the actor Clark Gable. In his innocence, he remarked once in his sister Leora’s presence that Gable “paralyzed me.” She retold the story, as she thought it was funny. At that stage in their lives kids knew nothing of homosexuality and having that kind of interest in a movie star was not odd. Kids were not as aware of the complicated possibilities of adult romantic encounters in the 1930’s.



“I try not to worry about things I can’t fix and concentrate on those that I think I can improve.”



Youth

YOUTH AND GRADE SCHOOL

WOODROW WAS A RED-HEADED, freckle-faced kid, and always among the smallest in the class. He believes his life-long tendency to avoid arguments stems from always being the smallest kid in class; he knew he didn't have a chance in a physical scuffle or fight. Only in Junior High school did he suddenly grow to an average height, seemingly overnight. He says he got more attention from his teachers (teacher's pet) because he was "cute" and always had the highest grade ranking of any male student in the class. The house the Baldwin's had purchased was on the edge of the area defined for his school's attendance. Woody realizes that although they were poor he was lucky to attend Wolflin elementary school in the classiest neighborhood of Amarillo. The association with the class of students whose goal was college inspired him to seek the same, instead of the goal of a laborer which would have been the more common aspiration of students in schools having a poorer or more rural population. Kids at that age were not as socially conscious as they became in high school, so Woodrow never felt inferior despite wearing patched clothes and worn-out shoes while the other classmates might have more and finer clothes.

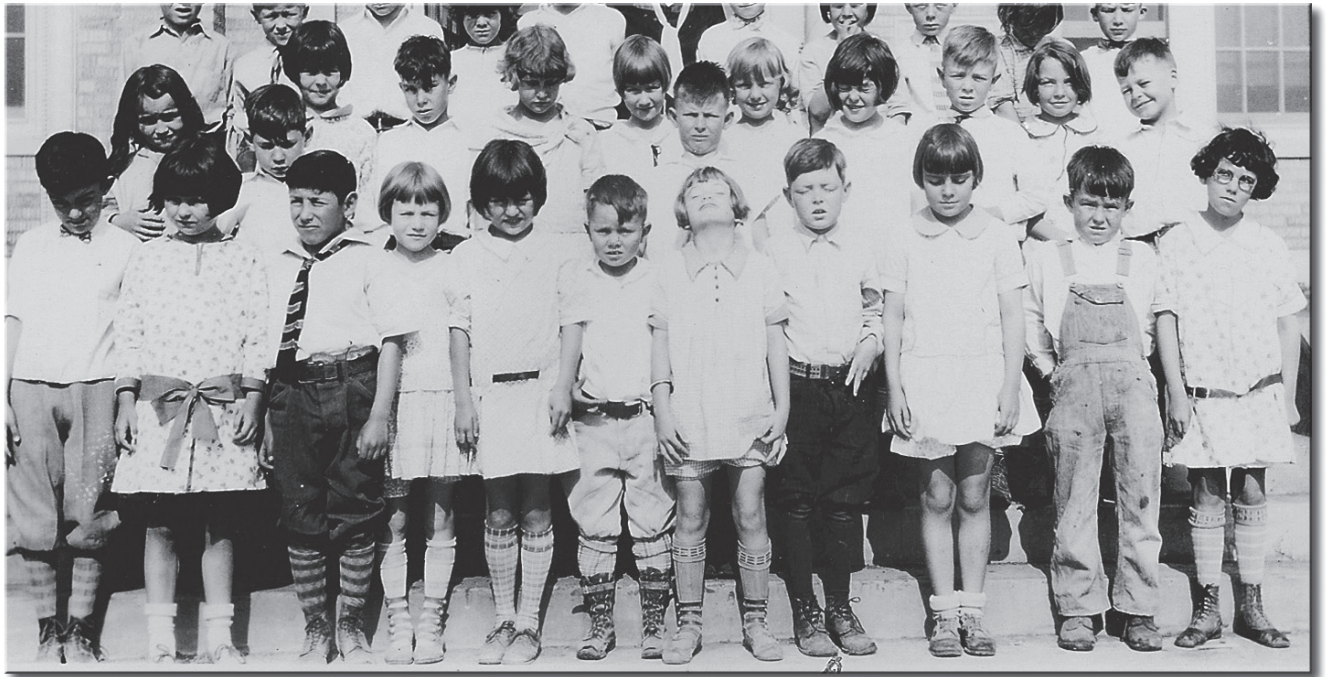
The grade school building was not finished when he began school so the school year started at another location, but soon transferred to the new building. Woody was one of the first students in the first grade and he remembers having Locker #1. He lived only 4 blocks from school so of course he walked.

No; the story does not have any tales of him walking to school on his hands through deep snow because he had no shoes.

Woodrow was an eager student and made good grades, other than the art courses. He had zilch talent in art and it often caused him to miss the honor roll as he would occasionally get a “C”. Woodrow was the fifth ranking student in the elementary school graduation and the highest grades achieving boy. He says he got along well with all but his third grade teacher. The school had promoted his first grade teacher to the second grade and so he had this very friendly teacher his first two years. She hugged the children and allowed a closeness that all the young ones enjoyed as it made their transition from home to school’s environment much easier. When Woodrow started the third grade, with the new teacher, there was an uncomfortable incident. Early on in the school year, the exact reason is forgotten, he had brought the teacher an apple. After the gift he gave the teacher a warm hug, as was accepted by his previous teacher, and was severely rebuked by this new person with a strong exclamation of “What are you doing? Don’t touch me!” With this unexpected and certainly undeserved rebuke Woodrow felt, from then on, a distance from the teacher — an awkwardness. One the other hand, he still remembers, when he was in the next (fourth) grade, what a thrill it was that the principal chose him to ring the big bell to signify the end of each period. A big responsibility for a small boy.

In the fifth grade the school started electing class officers, and he was elected Class President every year until graduation; although he asserts he doesn’t think it was anything more than his grades. Those who know Woody are not surprised at his being elevated to a position of honor. One can see consistently throughout the years, Woody is recognized and honored for his attention to the welfare of the group and his all inclusive non-prejudicial attitude. Even as a youngster he would not let physicality enter too much in judging people he didn’t know. Woody would force himself to get acquainted with the person he took an initial dislike to; and almost always found them to be much nicer than he originally thought. Certainly a trait more important to his peers than good grades.

Woodrow did not have a lot of friends. He thinks this was because he was so small and couldn’t play sports. In later years this feeling of not being part of a “gang” would continue to haunt him, making him assert, “I have lots of acquaintances but very few friends.” From this earlier isolation, due to his size, Woody always felt on the fringe of society; always concerned about what was wrong with him that he was not included in the list. This also presented itself in later years in his being a congenital worrier. He was more often silent when he could speak up but worried that his comment would hurt someone. He still



finds himself tending towards being too solitary and worrying too much but hides this by being publicly the optimist; wanting everything to be right.

Woodrow grew up in the approximate geographic middle of the Great Dust Bowl Storms of the 1930s. He remembers the depression and the Dust Bowl well. The immense dust storms often reduced visibility to a few feet. The Dust Bowl exodus was the largest migration in American history within a short period of time. By 1940, 2.5 million people had moved out of the Plains states. Why the Baldwins did not leave remains a mystery. Perhaps having already moved into town gave them a stronger financial base and less impetus to leave.

Farmers suffered terribly. The skies darkened and turned day into night. Seven times during one year the visibility was virtually zero. One notable blackout lasted eleven hours straight and in another instance a single storm lasted for 3 and 1/2 days! Many families suffered terribly during these horrific times, some to the point of near starvation. Elderly, as well as small children and babies, died as a result of dust sicknesses. Woodrow said, "We were in the heart of the dust bowl era and it was not uncommon for it to become as dark as midnight at 3 pm because the dust was so thick. People had to park their cars because they couldn't see to drive and so the drug store I was working in was an accessible destination to get out of the storm." He had the job of cleaning the store after a duster.

Young Woodrow was strongly affected by The Great Depression. America's Great Depression starting with the market crash of 1929 did not end until 1941 when America entered into World War II. Woodrow's father had lost his job because farm implements were not selling and both his father and mother took FDR's manufactured jobs to make ends meet. Woodrow recalls his mother working in a canning plant. He remembers parts of the depression well; "A constant stream of guys coming to the door wanting something to eat. If they offered to work for food, mother would feed them even though there was no work to be done. She drew the line (had to at some point because they didn't have much more than enough for him and his sister to eat) at those who did not offer to work but just wanted food."

Woodrow does define himself with having one particular negative personality aspect which developed during those defining years. He feels he is still too frugal. As the result of being a depression kid, he still can't throw away a paper clip or rubber band. Having gone through so many years of having to watch every penny, he comments that now, "I shy away from spending money that I should; I am sure many of my friends and acquaintances think I am "tight", and I can understand why they would have that impression." With the pre-qualification stated that he was not looking for sympathy by relating the tale, Woodrow conveys the following story from his youth:

When I was a kid safety matches had not been invented and mother used large size matches to light the kitchen stove. She saved the used ones and they were one of my favorite toys. She also gave me her old thread spools (She made the clothes for herself and all the girls). And, somewhere along the line I got a fair sized collection of marbles. I made farms out of the matches, for example, and the spools were cars and trucks and tractors, etc. The marbles were people. I don't remember any toys except for those marbles. I did have a tricycle when small, but I never had a bike. But I didn't know I was disadvantaged; I had fun with my make-believe toys.

Woodrow still has the marbles from his childhood, kept in a glass jar in his home, although he admits he no longer remembers their names nor the specifics of the games he played with them.

Woodrow remembers well-dressed men going through garbage disposal cans to find any remnants of food. Other aspects of the depression were not nearly as evident to a young teenaged boy. In 1930 the average income per year was \$1,970.00 and by 1939 it had dropped to \$1,730.00 per year. In 1930 a gallon of gas was 10 cents and by 1939 it was still 10 cents. Woodrow was so busy going to school from 8 to 3, working from 3 to 11 p.m., and then sleeping, that he did not have time to worry about the negative aspects of the



phenomenon. He commented, “. . . or maybe I was just not paying attention. I try not to worry about things I can't fix and concentrate on those that I think I can improve. The dust storms were a horrible thing, but it was to me just a part of nature; I was too young to move away, so I tolerated them.”

AGE 13 - 18: AMARILLO HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF '38

Amongst the “age defining events” for these formative years: Woodrow Baldwin would have been aware of The Emergency Banking Act passed to save the run on small banks and perhaps the start of work on building the Golden Gate Bridge. He would certainly have read with interest the stories of the bank robbers Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow and, in that same year, a young man's attention was certainly diverted by a running gun battle between FBI agents and the bank robber Baby Face Nelson. Although unaware that the 13th Dali Lama died in 1933, or that Humorist Will Rogers was killed in a plane crash near Barrow, Alaska in 1935. The distant events of Adolf Hitler becoming Fuehrer of Germany, head of state, as well as Chancellor would have little impact on Woodrow for a decade.

Woodrow's parents divorced when he was 13. His father was a “womanizer” and his mother discovered this when they had been married only a couple of years. She lived with this knowledge for 33 years because of the family, and because divorce was disgraceful in those days. Woodrow comments, “My father and I were never close, so my ability to cope with his leaving was not as hard as it would have been if we had experienced a good father-son relationship. Perhaps I was too young to comprehend the stigma of divorced parents, so I can't say that I ever felt cheated or neglected. I have had so much good fortune in my life that I have been able to cope fairly well with the few negative things.” — Woodrow's current attitude throughout life, of focusing on the positive course of events and his emphasis on finding the good side of things.

In later years Woodrow did see his father. The father, Claude, married twice more and eventually moved back to Amarillo. Woody saw him once or twice a year but his description of those visits show they were never close. Claude was senile during the last ten or so years of his life. Toward the end he didn't even remember having a son named Woodrow, although he did recognize the other four children. In typical Woodrow manner he says, “I was not disturbed by the lack of recognition. My father saw far less of me than he saw of the other children; they lived in Amarillo nearer to him.” This is a remarkable level of forgiveness for a father who basically abandoned Woody at

a young age. One memory however remains close to Woodrow from his father, who gave him a letter signed by President Woodrow Wilson as a memento.

The divorce was more difficult on Woodrow's mother. The girls appeared to side with their father and the boys to empathize with their mother's hurt at the rejection. Woodrow commented during the interviews for this writing:

This fact was, I think, significant because it caused a slight attitude tiff between the genders. My sisters forced me (by setting up appointments before I got home) to see more of my father than I wanted when I would come home [in later years] from California and Massachusetts. I never verbally expressed displeasure, but I knew it hurt my mother when I visited him. She was very bitter toward my father. They are even buried in separate cemeteries in Amarillo.

Woodrow's mother, in addition to becoming bitter at the circumstances from the abandonment, developed a critical and negative outlook towards others. She would comment, as an example, when she saw a happy couple walking down the street together, "Look at them. They probably aren't even married." The negative outlook did not seem to change Woodrow's positive one, or perhaps he developed his constant optimistic outlook as a balance against the pent up grief of his mother. His mother became even more fiercely independent after the divorce and in her declining years, in the retirement home, was a "monster" unable to accept that she couldn't walk or manage simple things on her own.

Woodrow Wilson Baldwin finished elementary school and moved to junior high school in 1933, at the age of 13. At this point in the narrative one must still refer to him as Woodrow, as except for his mother's nickname of Sonny, which was always how she spoke to him, the name Woodrow is how he was referred to by all who knew him. Although he does not recall this period being particularly traumatic such a significant change would have been difficult, yet he seems to have developed early skills at adapting to upheaval with an optimistic mind. This was still right in the middle of the depression, and his parents had just divorced. When his father left, his mother had nothing but household skills so she did baby-sitting, house cleaning, laundry, etc. for some of the more affluent families of the area. She was paid 10 cents per shirt. Many of Mrs. Baldwin's old customers remember her as one of "the sweetest ladies they had ever met." For the public she kept the hurt and bitterness of the divorce behind a kind and gentle smile.

When the Baldwin's moved to Amarillo in 1923, they had scraped up enough money to make a down payment and have a house built for them at 1211 W. 18th Street. This was at a time when Amarillo barely deserved a gas station. All five children were raised there until the Depression years.



After the father left, and all the older siblings had moved away, his mother Ledia rented the home and made mortgage payments for it with a laundry service she provided. She moved Woody and herself to a small bungalow behind Woodrow's older brother's house; vowing not to move back again until the home was entirely paid for.

The house that young adolescent Woodrow lived in with his mother during his early high school, and junior college years would, by today's standards, be considered a shed. The shed consisted of one small room divided by makeshift walls to include a tiny kitchen and an even tinier bathroom. The brother (Olbert) worked as a delivery driver for the biggest bakery in Amarillo but could ill afford to subsidize his mother and younger brother. He had married twelve years earlier, at 17, and had his own growing family to worry about. His wife worked also to support the family, running an S&H savings stamp store. Although the benefit of giving rudimentary shelter was a great blessing, the house lacked any privacy for the budding young hero of our story. It was certainly not the sort of home to which a young man brought friends after school on days he didn't have to work.

The mother and son lived in the small shed for a couple of years. They shared the same bedroom, which was also their living room. Later on, when Olbert moved to Lubbock to be in charge of the Pepsi franchise there, they were financially able to rent a small one room apartment in town where they again lived in very close quarters. One small room for the working mother and the teenage son with a bathroom shared with one other apartment on the same floor. These years would be the ones wherein Woodrow developed his patience and sense of awareness for the feelings of others. After a short time in the apartment Woodrow's mother was able to find a small house to rent and they lived in that house through his time in junior college. Ledia was able in the small house to begin to take in laundry, rather than go to peoples homes to do it, and the living room of the house was crammed full of her equipment. Because there was only the one other room, the mother and son again shared the bedroom, but at least in this home she placed a quilt across the bedroom to give some sense of privacy and help maintain a better sense of modesty. Mrs. Baldwin did however achieve her goal of returning to live in the home on 18th Street in 1944, while her youngest son was in the Army, by converting it into a duplex and renting out the one unit to afford to live in the other.

During his high school years, and later in college, Woodrow had to work to make his way. There were no programs for disadvantaged children in the early years of the 20th century. If he wanted books, school supplies, and the basics which we today take for granted as being given to today's students, he had to work.

Woodrow worked full time at the downtown Amarillo drugstore from the age of 13 till after high school, when he worked at a clothing store during the school year and the drug store during the summers. He started first as a “car hop” attendant bringing beer, soft drinks, ice cream to the drive up lot area. There were no canned drinks in those days, only bottles and draft. The store sold some sandwiches, made by some guys wife, for 10 cents each. His second job at the store, including the usual cleaning and stocking shelves, was as a soda jerk at the fountain counter. He also was the local delivery boy. The longer distance deliveries being made by a fellow with a motorcycle.

During Prohibition the drugstore sold liquor illegally out of the Prescription room. The boss was a binge alcoholic and occasionally he and his buddies would be found the next morning passed out in the room. Woody’s Saturday deliveries started out as a bit of a worry for him. He was delivering illegal booze to three or four clients. As it turned out there was some hidden pleasure to be found in these walking distance deliveries. Regular deliveries to two women resulted in our young heroes first encounter with adult sexual activities and one must wonder if the boss thought he was just a very slow delivery boy. There was also a group of fellows who drank at one of their wives apartments, as she was away every Saturday. They played the very dangerous game of drawing him into allowing one of them to have sexual relations with him, and eventually each of them. If they had been caught or reported for sex with a minor, especially same-sex, the consequences would have been dire. Lynching for such offenses or an unexplained “accident” was not uncommon in those days.

After Prohibition the drug store owner opened a bottle store next door to the drugstore and sold whiskey and alcohol from there. It was still illegal to sell mixed drinks from either establishment, but the clever folks figured a way around that too. They would buy their liquor in the bottle store and come to the counter of the drug store and order a fizzy, but not quite in a full glass, with the understanding that nobody would take notice when the drink was spiked. Woody was still uncomfortable with this .

In mentioning that he occasionally received oral sex from these older men, when he was around 14, he doesn’t recall it having any effect other than he found it very exciting. He says he never felt guilty or remorseful about it — never felt he was “abused” by anyone — simply enjoyed it immensely. “Being so young (14), I was not mature enough to realize the social consequences of homosexual behavior,” he said. Here are the early formations of Woodrow’s open minded attitude towards sexuality. When asked where he stands on sex, Baldwin replied, “I have always been a “live and let live” sort of person. I do not condemn those persons who choose ways of expression that are different from mine. As long as they are not hurting others by their behavior, I am tolerant.”



On this subject Woodrow wrote a very funny column in his later years, about learning the birds and the bees as a child in Amarillo, Texas in the late 1920s and early 1930s. He wrote about the misinformation he and his peers were given as kids:

No one with authority ever told me about birds and bees and homo sapiens. I learned it all from other mal-informed adolescents — and later from perhaps mal-intentioned dirty old men and women. And I heard some pretty weird things! I was in the third grade when my wise 9-year-old buddy (Gordon) taught me that I was quitting too soon in my masturbation process. Then at age 12 or 13, this same masturbation act resulted in the explosion of a white, gooey liquid. I thought for sure I had broken my favorite toy. Some of my more resourceful friends (younger than I) were present when the crisis occurred. After my harrowing night, they reported back the next day (after doing extensive research) that this was what made babies and was nothing to worry about.

First, I heard that if I masturbated, I would go crazy. The result was that I kept on playing, but now with anxiety. I worried myself almost into dementia. Then I heard the old chestnut that it would make me blind. Goodness knows, if that were true I would have had a seeing eye dog long ago. It was this theory that gave rise to the joke “But can’t I do it just until I need glasses?”

When we had finally learned that that slimy stuff was the stuff that made babies, what a rash of theories that produced! One of them I remember is that each time the act was performed we deprived our someday child of one part of his body. I guess I rationalized that eventually I’d waste away one entire baby and then I could stop when I began the new one. I don’t recall how I reckoned that I was going to know when one baby stopped and the second began. I guess I thought that miraculously I would know when the first child was completely destroyed. Then I could stop the activity and child #2 would be normally complete. At a time perhaps later than other folks would, I realized this was not true.

He makes the humorous statement that, at about 16 or 17, young Woodrow realized that, if he were going to heaven, he had to get out of the Baptist church, so he moved to the Methodist church, an added incentive being he was dating the pastor’s daughter at the time. The Methodist church was a bit more liberal than the Baptist, but not much. Woodrow wrote in his later years:

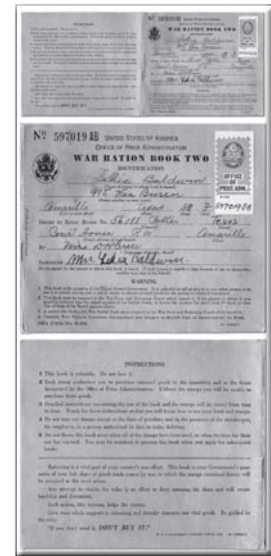
I have never understood what religion has to do with sex, and vice versa. I was raised in the Bible Belt with all the fundamentalist trappings. As a kid, I wondered about the geographical expansiveness of a hell that could accommodate everyone who swore, played cards, danced — not to mention (dare I?) masturbated or had sex out of wedlock. Some words describing sexual activities were in themselves so offensive even to contemplate that the church leaders would obscure their meanings by using expressions that served only to confuse and often result in the complete loss of their meaning.

I progressed or regressed to having my own personal religion because organized religion did not seem to fit into what my god and I considered to be natural and productive. So I stayed away from organized religion entirely for some thirty years. This was comfortable but not entirely fulfilling. Later on I discovered a very liberal church which never threatened with either heaven or hell, but instead encouraged me to think. No religion I had experienced before ever gave me leeway to think; the church spoon-fed all my religion and I was obligated to believe as the church dictated. This new freedom allowed me and my God (who I had begun to think was unique only to me) to be comfortable in our relationship.

Woodrow is not one to drown in self-pity and never felt disadvantaged by having to work full time through the high school years. He loved to work and felt that he learned a lot that his peers were not exposed to until much later in life, if ever. Working the long hours limited participation in extracurricular activities and he became just an above-average student at high school. Woodrow graduated in 1938 with a grade point average of 86.37. His notes remind us: “Funny how we remember such insignificant things like that when nowadays I can’t remember whether I have taken my pills.”

He keeps a picture from his junior high school yearbook of the girl who was his first sweetheart although they were too young to truly date. He dated other people all through high school. He says he dated just because it was what you were supposed to do and it was a change from the daily grind. He had a reprieve from work only a couple of nights a week. Without a car, he tended to double date with friends who had cars. This was long before the birth control pill. There was absolutely no way anybody dared get a girl pregnant and even condoms were a difficulty to obtain for those rare few so courageous as to try more than conventions of the day allowed. He writes as openly as he speaks:

So after a show, or whatever the date was centered on, we’d park and the worst we did was kiss. Gals did not want to get pregnant and the





guys didn't want to impregnate a gal; because in those days if you did so you married her. We didn't dare consummate then, so we were still horny after taking them home and we did what teenage boys do. Right? But we never touched each other.

Baldwin remains very private about other sexual escapades of his youth and shies away from discussing them in detail.

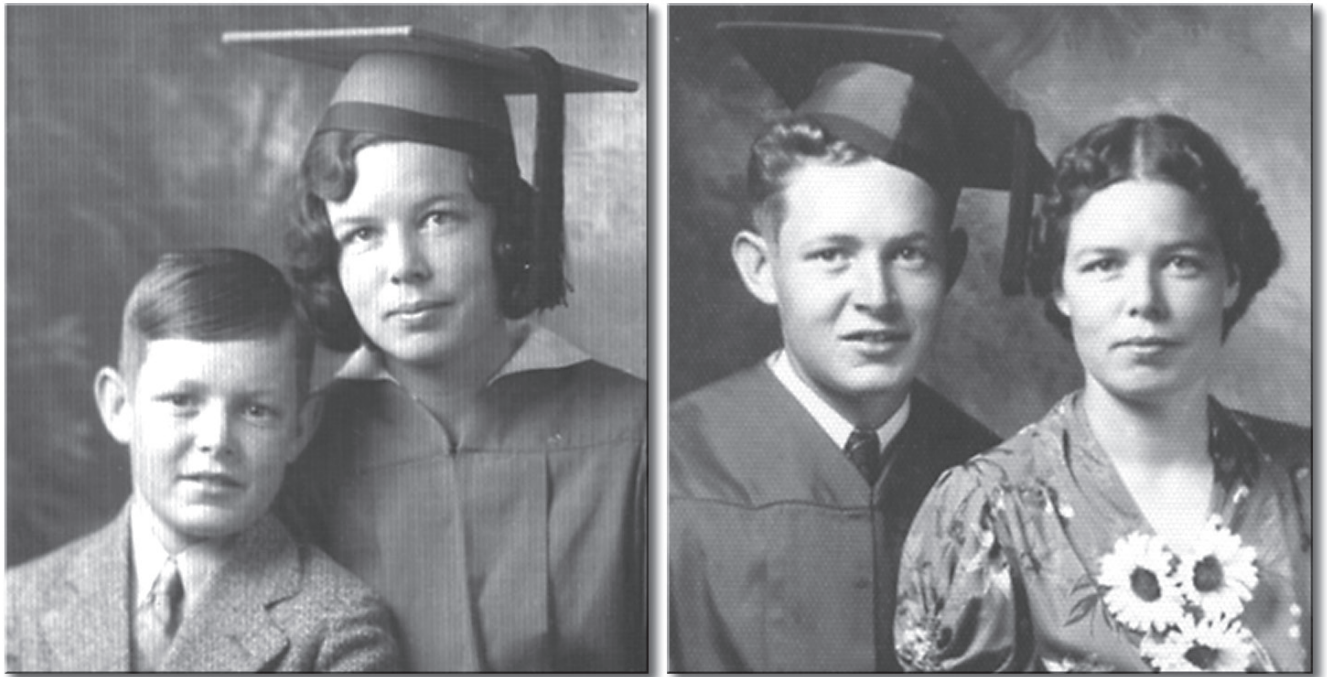
During these years Woody did not make many friends or develop close friendships. He was booked pretty solidly between work and school and home responsibilities. He was well liked and had some best "buddies" but didn't chum around with them because he didn't have time. No significant girl friends are remembered but he does recall a regular surreptitious romantic relationship with a Senior High School English teacher. The years seemed to just go by. A period in his life when he does not recall many significant events, unlike the tumultuous years which followed shortly after.

Woodrow was exempt from Physical Education Classes because he was working but he did enter the Musical Memory Competition every year. As a young man, and even into his retirement years, he loved a friendly competition. He was not good enough to be on the team challenge to recognize the song, composer, genre, instrument, or voice range; except for the 7th grade when he did make the team. Regardless he won pins in the 5th, and 6th as well as the team in the 7th. He eventually became president of every organization he belonged to, then and in his later years, and always remained undaunted in his goal but never vicious. He was running for Class President in the 7th grade, after having been elected in the 5th and 6th grades, and at the last minute he found himself suddenly opposed by a group running for President, Vice President and Secretary and who had signs and pins and a very "classy" campaign. Woody was running only by nomination, not by asking or seeking the goal. Woody still won the title as President but doesn't think it was popularity, rather that it was his academic achievements and a natural ability to be a leader, one who could delegate and share responsibility easily. A winning factor in his future endeavors.

When put in a position of responsibility Woodrow says he, "wants the organization to be the best it has ever been. I really work hard at that and enjoy immensely the efforts involved, although there are time I feel like I overdo it because I want to be more than just another President of the organization. I want to be the best."

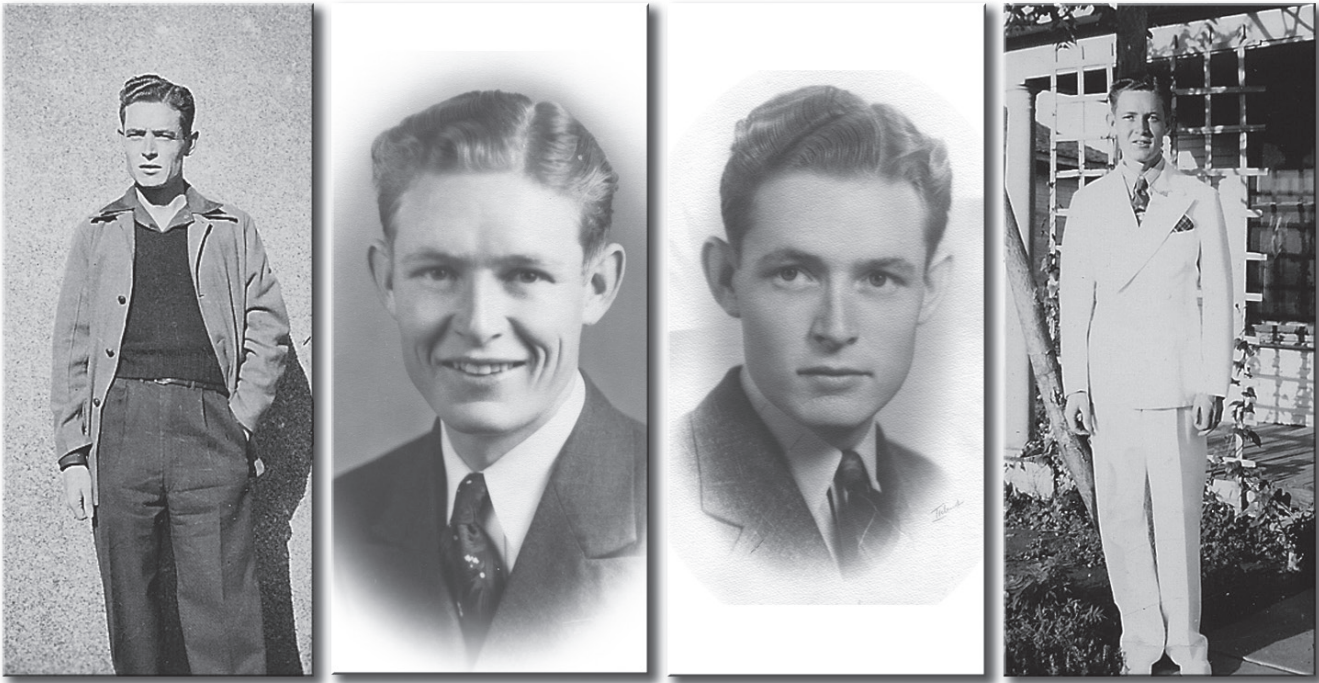
When he would have normally finished high school it was 1937, and still the heart of Depression. The pre-college school years in the '30s consisted of only eleven grades. In those days they didn't have scholarships and government loans, etc. You either had money or you worked. The Baldwins did not have the money for college, so Woodrow graduated in 1938 having stayed in high school an extra year to get the necessary skills to work his way through college. Woodrow intentionally dropped one course in his last normal year so he couldn't graduate and so, during the following year he only had to take typing, shorthand and bookkeeping. Woodrow W. Baldwin was one of the 41 Honor Roll students who made the "A" list in 1938 when was taking only three courses, instead of four. Today he is still alumni president of the 1938 Amarillo High School graduating class. At their last reunion in 2008; 25 (from an original class size of 478) attended.

During that last year of high school Woodrow's shorthand teacher was the Dean of Women of the School; the disciplinarian. The shorthand class was at 1 pm and in those days returning late from lunch was a worse sin than having a baby out of wedlock is today. Each guilty girl had to see the Dean so this shorthand teacher was frequently called out of class. She had the class elect a



substitute teacher on those occasions when she had to perform as disciplinarian. With his usual luck in those circumstances, the class elected him. Prior to the election he had been struggling to just get by in the shorthand class and was not doing well in the subject. But, with this new responsibility he spent every spare minute he could find working on shorthand with the result that he became very good at it. Spare minutes were hard to find; remember he worked in a drug store 8 hours a day all through high school. The push from the election changed his life in the immediate moment and had a significant effect on his entire future academic career.

When his sister Leora, with whom he was closest, had her high school graduation the two children created a paired photo with her in high school graduation gown. As a mark of her closeness to Woodrow, she returned to make the same photo when he graduated.



“For a poor kid from the farms, exposure to city life and culture was a privilege which I never forgot nor took for granted.”



Adulthood

AMARILLO JUNIOR COLLEGE

NOW 19 YEARS OLD, Woodrow began attendance at Amarillo Junior College for his first two college years, graduating in 1940. He had applied for, and received, one of the early scholarship programs offered at a Baptist School in Boston, Massachusetts. After further analysis of the arrangements and the financial aid offered, he determined he could not afford to live in Boston. The scholarship only covered tuition and a very small living stipend. No money for books plus the cost to move made it impossible. So he stayed at home and attended school in Amarillo, supplementing his income and paying for his schooling by working in a clothing store; J. Levy Men's Store. It was while working here that he became conscious of clothes as a style and as a luxury, not simply as a necessity of life. He also acted as one of the two models for shows of the latest fashions held at the Rotary Club or in the store.

Here Woodrow learned to dress well, with impeccable taste, with just enough "flash" to add color, but never ostentatiously. Just as he has always felt a car is just transportation, his earlier upbringing formed his opinion that clothes were more functionally important than an adornment. He did not compensate for the lack of finery in his youth by becoming overly obsessed with the acquisition of fine clothes. But he was aware enough of wardrobe to change his regularly. And he continued to work at the drugstore in Amarillo during the summers. Hard work and steady focus on his career were deeply embedded self-disciplines.

From his high school Dean of Women, Woodrow had a letter, on his behalf, to the chairman of the Secretarial Studies Department at the college about this “shorthand whiz.” Woodrow took another shorthand course at Amarillo College and again immediately became the teacher’s pet. The reader will perceive again and again this pattern of recognition and honor appearing in his life’s stream. This came not just from luck, as he would say, but from both his academic effort and a certain charm — a magnetic attraction which he manifested, and still does to this day. This recognition meant that two years later, when he enrolled at the University of Oklahoma, the Amarillo College teacher wrote an unsolicited letter to the department chairman at Oklahoma about this shorthand whiz who would be attending Oklahoma University. The sequence of references that strongly influenced his college and ensuing career path, was not uncommon for this generation. He had come from an impoverished background but worked hard and had that little bit of luck that helped him get ahead and wasn’t wasted. A reference from high school benefited him in junior college and a similar letter gave him a leg up in college while in later years those unsolicited references promoted him at UCLA and again at Simmons.



Other than the academic courses, Woodrow doesn’t have much to add about those junior college years except that they were not that spectacular. He remarks, “We were Depression kids, so we worked eight hours a day and couldn’t join many clubs.” Baldwin did become Vice President of the Northwest Texas Intercollegiate Student’s Conference and attended the sessions of the organization at Texas Technological College. A newspaper article from the time reads: “Mr. Woodrow Baldwin of Amarillo College was awarded the 140 words-per-minute shorthand pin, which the arts and credentials department of the Gregg Publishing Company presents to those students who qualify for such awards. Mr. Baldwin took dictation on new congressional material for five minutes dictated at the rate of 140 words-per-minute, and then transcribed his notes at 96.86 accuracy — the highest of the award recipients.” This award places students in a class with expert shorthand writers. Unknown to him, the Gregg Publishing Company would later shift his life unexpectedly towards further academic success.

Woodrow was elected secretary of the freshman class. Although not president this time, he was still involved in the group of students that were picked as leaders. He was president of the YMCA-YWCA which was the largest club on campus. Woodrow was going through one of his religious kicks during his junior college years but didn’t last beyond that. Until his retirement, he was unable to find a religious group which agreed with his

open-minded attitude towards all human beings, regardless of race, religion, status, gender, or sexual orientation. Prejudice towards other bona fide card carrying humans, as he refers to our collective race, is not something he was able to accommodate despite wanting to be part of a religious environment. Being taught that love, compassion and brotherhood were the basic tenets of Christianity did not match with the bigotry and prejudice he was hearing from the pulpit.

Woodrow has no recollection of his grades, although he does remember being strongly influenced by a particular sociology professor. Baldwin did not like this teacher at the time, but in retrospect thinks he may have been the best professor he had in any college he attended because the professor taught the class to look at both sides of a question.

He dated a gal whose fiancé was at Texas Tech at the time. The fiancé knew they were dating, and Woodrow guesses the fiancé was also dating on the side. It didn't seem odd to either of them that this lady was dating them both. They did remain in touch over the years and Woodrow saw them grow a fine family. He has never regretted not having children. During his high school and college years he did have several successful romantic encounters with women and still finds ladies excellent companions.

Woodrow never distanced himself from his family. As he was leaving Amarillo at age 18 to attend Oklahoma University (only 280 miles east but still a significant change in lifestyle for the young man) all the siblings came for dinner. As children their mother's punishment when they fought had been to make them kiss — a terrible punishment because at that point they wanted to kill each other. His sister Leora, with whom he grew up, was the last in line. All the other siblings had bid him adieu with hugs and kisses. When it came her turn, she started crying and said, "This is the first time I've ever kissed you that I didn't have to."

The deaths of his siblings in the later years were hard on Woodrow, harder than the passing of his parents. Both his parents were quite ill in their final years; frustrated and extremely unhappy as they slowly lost their independence. He felt it was for the best when they finally passed away, his mother in 1966 and his father in the following year while Woodrow was a Professor at Simmons. His siblings died of cancer, stroke and heart attack from 1983 to 1998, all of them after he had fully retired from academia. Woodrow has always been very adept at putting the past behind him and getting on with life, unsure even now whether that is a virtue or a handicap. He mourned them and went on with his life, but still thinks about all of them quite frequently.

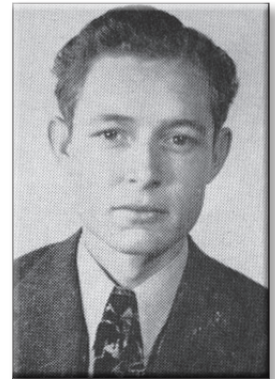
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

Following graduation from Amarillo Junior College in the spring of 1940, Woodrow attended the University of Oklahoma for two years starting in the fall semester. It was there at Oklahoma University that his name changed from Woodrow to Woody. Not really sure how it came about, he says, "The other students just immediately tagged me with the name Woody, even the teachers, and soon I began to refer to myself by that name." He received his two year Bachelor of Science degree in 1942. Woody was still only 20 when the first draft registration for World War II was held September 16, 1940 (for all men between 21 and 36 years of age). Woody barely missed being pulled into the war between high school and college. There were exemptions for those enrolled in school. If he had been caught in-between, he could have been caught in the early draft rolls.

When Baldwin entered high school, he thought he wanted to be a doctor. So in preparation he took 4 years of Latin and 4 years of science and absolutely hated both subjects. Then he began to seek his Business Administration Degree in earnest. He recalls that in the junior college almost everyone was in an engineering (he asserts he is not mechanically inclined) or business administration major. For him the Business Administration Degree was the lesser of the evils, having less to do with hard science and more to do with working with people.

At Oklahoma University, Professor Vernon Musselman, the Chairman of the Education Department, was working on his doctorate and also taking a graduate course. The later course conflicted with the shorthand course he was teaching to undergraduates. Although Woody was only a junior in college at the time; Professor Musselman hired Baldwin to teach the shorthand course. He even gave him the responsibility of supervising six practice teachers. The Chairman came to influence his career more than just this one time. Later on, after the stint in the Army, when Woody was applying to UCLA for his graduate studies, Professor Musselman wrote a letter to the head of the Business Education Department at UCLA about this shorthand whiz who was coming there to do graduate study. That letter had as big an impact at UCLA as the background in teaching responsibilities. One can see, Woody benefitted often from an era when rules could be bent or one could be simply recommended to a position without having to file multiple applications and/or meet exact requirements.

Just as during his high school years, young Woody was working every job he could find. Among them was working and modeling for a men's store in Oklahoma City on Saturdays. Woody was also teaching a shorthand class for adults one evening a week; good practice as in later years he often found



himself teaching teachers and adults, rather than simply teaching young students. One job was checking out playing cards, dominoes, etc. in the Student Union Building; another was washing pots and pans for the fraternity house; and he also worked for a Psychology Professor as secretary for his research papers. Woody writes, "Lucky again! It could have been engineering." Not many college students in the early 1940s had the opportunity to be exposed (no pun intended) to a subject still very controversial in those days. The Psychology Professor was considered something of an authority on sexuality. Woody admits borrowing a book from his collection a time or two to read for his own pleasure, but personal sexual activities were never a topic of discussion; theirs was strictly a boss/secretary relationship.

Despite the work and academics, like any good college student, Woody managed somehow to have a satisfactory social life. He says in those days they changed roommates every semester but, "I won't bore you (and others) with describing them." He dated a fair amount, and one of the encounters actually brought him close to marriage. The first serious discussion of marriage was rebuffed by Woody saying he "didn't believe in marriage before military service as he might not survive the war." The lady would not accept this gallant first excuse so Woody had to clarify the other issue, that he also enjoyed the company of men. That seemed to work. They wrote for a time while he was in the service, but she married before he received his honorable discharge in 1945..

Woody claims his life at Oklahoma University was "not spectacular to say the least." He did, however, belong to Delta Chi Fraternity, which was better than life in the dorm room and was not much more expensive. He became the secretary of the fraternity the second year, probably because he knew shorthand, but as he was only there two years he didn't develop any long-standing friendships. Woody is still an avid Oklahoma University and UCLA fan. Yes, he dated (had to be in a fraternity) but is reluctant to discuss his college romances. He does recall he never saw an Oklahoma University sporting event as he worked on Saturdays. Baldwin looks back and wonders how he did all the things he had to do academically with such a heavy work schedule. Baldwin says, "I was young and ambitious; I guess that explains a lot of things." And he adds, "Because I knew shorthand, I became secretary of everything I joined until I finally put my foot down and refused."

WOODY IN THE ARMY — 1942-1945

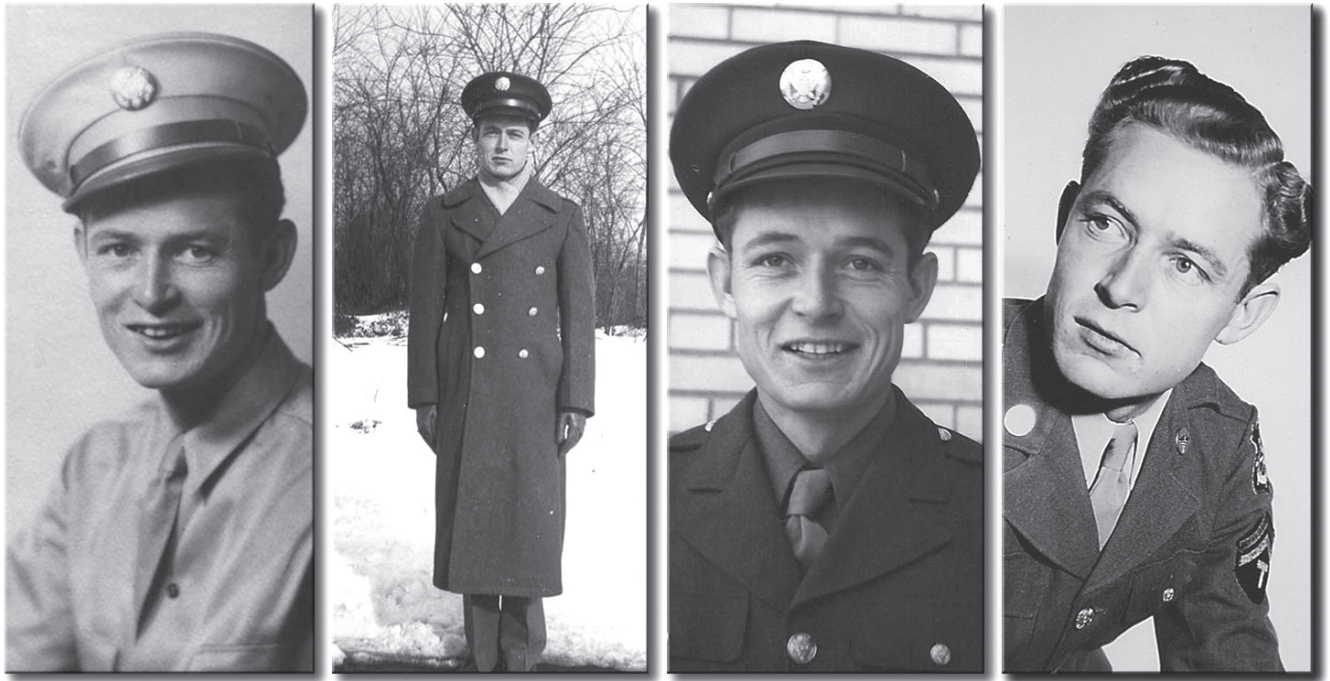
Baldwin "stepped out of my cap and gown and right into an Army uniform for the next three years." Private Baldwin served as an enlisted man in the Army from 1942 until he was honorably discharged in 1945. He joined the

armed forces around the same time that a young girl in Holland, on her 13th birthday, made the first entry in a diary which was later renamed and published as "The Diary of Anne Frank." The Japanese naval advance in the Pacific was halted at the battle of Midway about this same time. General Patton was commander of the newly activated First Armored Corps and was assigned to Operation Torch; the invasion of North Africa.

Due to an error on someone's part, Private Baldwin was sent from the induction center directly into the assembly arena for General Patton's army. This error meant he missed basic training. After the assembling for Operation Torch, Private Woodrow W. Baldwin went to the port of embarkation at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. While there, it was discovered that Baldwin had not had basic training and therefore could not be sent overseas. There was also an Army regulation that once you got to a Port of Embarkation, you could NOT be sent back for further training, so Baldwin found himself in a Catch 22 situation.

Woody was reticent to speak much about this frustrating period of his life because, while his friends and "brothers in arms" were truly fighting the War, he was stuck stateside. "I am very embittered about my Army experience and don't even like to talk about it," he commented early in the interviews regarding this period. It was one of the very few times the author of this sketch found Woody embittered about anything. He went in with expectations of going to Officer Candidate School and becoming a commissioned officer. Because of the assignment error, he never got basic training so he had no chance of becoming an officer, even though he had a bachelor's degree by that time, and neither could he go overseas. Woody said; "I could not get any kind of promotion for the first 20 months. I was in the replacement pool because there was no place I could go without basic training."

Eventually Private Baldwin did get assigned to the station hospital and he served as secretary to the head of psychiatry there. When the head of psychiatry was promoted to head of the entire medical branch of the hospital, Baldwin followed him along. The upside of the situation was, in Woody's terms, "he was a gem." The hospital and barracks were just an hour out of New York City. Private Baldwin worked 9 to 5 Monday thru Friday so he spent his weekends in NYC. He did get assigned permanently to the hospital, but by this time their "table of organization" was full. Again, this meant no promotion was possible. After the army regulations that no one from the replacement pool could be assigned to a station complement were lifted, Private Baldwin was finally promoted to Technician 1st Grade; that was somewhere between private first class and corporal, but he was now addressed as "Corporal".



Not to be caught in bouts of self pity, Baldwin comments that the upside of the experience was the interesting job as secretary to the head of the Psychiatric division of the hospital. Later when his boss was promoted, Corporal Baldwin was exposed to all parts of the medical non-surgical program. It was enlightening for him as he knew nothing about medical procedures. Since Baldwin was the only male secretary, he got very interesting assignments which the others didn't experience. He did all the autopsy testimony reports since it was "too gruesome" for women and attended at the sodium amytal (truth serum) sessions as, when on the drugs, guys were not conscious of what they were saying and their language was too gross for the delicate (so they thought in those days) women. Baldwin took down the questions and answers and then transcribed them as a part of the patient's record. The psychiatrist conducted the sessions. The truth serum sessions were conducted on those patients with whom, the psychiatrist felt, it was important to know what experiences the soldier had that might be a cause of his mental condition. Corporal Baldwin's job was purely clerical. Other times, when they had a serious medical case that needed a specialist from New York City, Baldwin would be called in the middle of the night to take the doctor's testimony. The civilian doctors were so busy during the day with their private practices it was the only time they were available. Baldwin, in typical "look on the bright side" outlook, said that he never resented that duty as it was so educational.

Life in the barracks was nothing particularly memorable. 30-40 bunks to a barracks and more rules than one could remember. Baldwin thought it was funny that revelry was called so early that it was usually dark and the guys would end up stumbling out to the ramp for roll call half-asleep, half dressed, in their underwear, or even naked. It was so dark nobody could see. On another noted weekend, when they were all confined to base for some reason, some fellows had snuck in enough liquor that they all got so smashed that the majority of them awoke half clothed and sleeping on the floor where they had passed out. As for his weekends in New York, they are described as “wonderful.” New York City was noted during the war as the friendliest city to servicemen. If one walked into a bar in uniform you could not buy a drink. The civilians vied for the opportunity to pay for the servicemen’s drinks. Baldwin says he did not abuse the privilege, but the few times he ate in regular restaurants, some stranger always picked up the check.

Baldwin’s pay was \$21 a month for the first 2 years. It cost Corporal Baldwin \$1 round trip to get from the post (Camp Kilmer, NJ) to New York by train. After getting there, he could eat free at the canteens and paid only 50 cents a night to stay at the Henry Hudson Hotel where they fashioned a dormitory for servicemen. He could shower and change to civilian clothes there. Servicemen in New York City could go to the theatre, ballet, symphony, etc. for free. So New York was very inexpensive. Otherwise, Baldwin would not have been able to go almost every weekend. He saw most all of the biggest Broadway hits such as “Oklahoma.” There were also lots of fun wartime light-hearted musicals like “Something For The Boys” with Ethel Merman, and “Follow the Girls” with Jackie Gleason. The Stage Door Canteen was where servicemen got food and drink and the stage celebrities danced with them. The USO (United Service Organization) arranged social activities. Then too, there were lots of private parties for GIs, again posted on the board at USO: “Party tonight at 225 West 86th St., Apt. 509, no need to call, just come.”

For a poor kid from the farms, this exposure to city life and culture was a privilege which he never forgot nor took for granted. The opportunities to see Broadway productions strongly contributed to his love of the theater which he has to this day; although, in his later years he’s had to give it up because of poor hearing. Baldwin thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to see opera (also when stationed in the NYC area) but never developed a real love of that art form. This was also his first experience with ballet and that is still an art he can enjoy in retirement.

Although there was plenty of opportunity for romantic encounters in the cocktail lounges and bars, Woody did that very seldom. It was a mark of distinction that civilians bragged about; picking up a serviceman and taking him



home. But Woody does not seem to have been very interested in being a “mark of distinction.” During the war Woody recalls no sense of oppression towards alternate lifestyle sexual activities. Everybody was very aware they might be sent overseas any day and life could end very quickly for young men. The bars and police and many peers turned a blind eye to such “side line” activity, as long as it was not overt or too public. The Astor Hotel had a bar which was very friendly towards having men gather there and a few of the Greenwich Village bars were also. Although there were exclusively gay bars, those were rather seedy and Private Baldwin avoided them.

Across from the barracks in New Jersey was a Johnson and Johnson plant. An Army Sergeant who lived in New Jersey was working part time there and he and Woody crossed paths and this led to a short-term close friendship. Private Woody was working another part time job as a bartender for the non-commissioned officers club and also selling tickets at the base movie theater. Woody recalls this more for the embarrassment at that Christmas than for the strength of the friendship. This fellow came from a wealthy local family and as Woody was away from home for the first time at Christmas the family invited him over. Their Christmas tradition was very simple. They just gave each other an envelope with money in it. Private Baldwin’s family had gone overboard sending him presents from all the brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews, since he was away from home. Poor Woody had to sit in his host’s house and open all these dozens of presents, feeling pretty much alone as the host’s family “oohed and aahed” at his simple gifts.

He had his first significant romantic interest while he was in the service. Early on in his New York exposure, Woody met a sailor (a chief) in the Navy with whom he had a glorious affair. They were very close and spent most of their weekends together, his first long-term relationship. They met in a bar where a civilian bought Woody a drink and then ended up introducing him to Russ Jenter who was from Los Angeles. Russ was extremely handsome, well dressed in uniform or “civvies,” a charmer, and an accomplished piano player. Chief Jenter made the first move by writing Woody a note inviting him out for an evening. Russ was stationed in Philadelphia so their time together was spent more south of where Woody was stationed, in New Jersey, rather than north towards New York. Russ was eventually shipped out and was stationed in the Pacific. Woody was discharged before Russ was, and as you’ll soon read, went to Los Angeles. Russ joined him there shortly thereafter, and they lived together for some time.

After Russ was transferred to the west coast, Baldwin admits he was the most promiscuous he has ever been. It seems the fires of youth had been fully ignited. Having lost his primary outlet, within the significant relationship,

both men allowed that the other was free to play the field while they were separated due to the war, but they had also vowed, when the war was over, they would return to their romance. The separation was a hardship on the young men but they seem to have adapted to the situation in a way that was comfortable for both of them. He says that on Long Island was a nude beach (divided by gay and straight) and during the summer he went there many times and to both sides of the beach. In summary, Woody closed on this subject by saying; "New York was very exciting to a young 'hick' from Amarillo, Texas."

Woody's other best Army buddy was Private Brockbank, coincidentally also from Los Angeles. He was working in the same physical proximity as Woody although not in the same barracks. They shared meals occasionally at the hospital staff dining room and would sneak out for a 5 cent hamburger on Tuesday evenings when the hospital always served spinach and beans. The spinach was never well-cleaned and often had rocks in it. Hamburgers without rocks were a much better arrangement. They never palled around outside the Army, but when they were in the service, Woody says, "He was always there if I needed him." Brockbank, his first name is lost to memory, taught Woody a lot about living life as a homosexual. Woody was very naïve when he entered the service. For instance, Brockbank told him how to recognize a gay man in a group. "A gay man's eyes are always roaming," he said, "where a hetero will look straight ahead not scanning the room like a gay man." Another thing he taught Woody was never to take a "pick up" home; always go to his place because if he is up to killing queers, he won't do it on his own property. Brockbank and Baldwin were best friends and Brockbank, being older, was considered by Woody as a mentor whom he looked up to. They were close but never slept together. He dazzled Woody with his stories of gay life in Los Angeles and this somewhat rakish romantic life style instilled a desire in Woody to move to the West Coast when he got out of the service. Since Brockbank turned 38 while they were in the service in New Jersey, and Woody was still a mere 24 years old, Brockbank was discharged earlier. Woody saw, and later on lived near his friend, on Brockbank's lady-friend's property, during his stay in Los Angeles.

As mentioned earlier, when Baldwin was at Oklahoma University, the department chairman Professor Musselman and he had become good friends. Musselman was now a commissioned officer in the Navy while Baldwin was stuck as a non-com in the Army. They kept in touch while they were both in the service, and spent a few weekends together, with Musselman and his wife, when they were stationed in New Jersey. As he neared discharge, Officer Musselman happened (in another odd coincidence) to be stationed in California. Corporal Baldwin wrote and told Musselman he wanted to get a master's degree and asked if he should apply to UCLA, Southern Cal, Cal Berkeley



or Stanford? Musselman requested a month to consider and then wrote back. He thought in the field of Business Education, it was UCLA head and shoulders above the others. As part of Woody's long range planning was to live in California; that was where Woody thought he, as a homosexual man, should be. Based on his army buddy's tales and Musselman's advice, Woody sought admission at UCLA. The two stayed in touch for many years and Woody only recently learned that Musselman passed away in 1970, at the age of 56. Too young by Baldwin's reckoning.



“Students at UCLA thought of me as a real womanizer.
I was a favorite as a fraternity party chaperone
because I was looser with the rules.”



Academics

UCLA: THE MASTERS, THE DOCTORATE AND “PROFESSOR” BALDWIN

WHEN WWII ENDED IN 1945, Corporal Baldwin went to UCLA earning both his Master of Arts Degree (1947) and his Doctor of Education Degree (1952). But, a funny thing happened on the way to the Masters Degree. Corporal Baldwin was discharged too late to start the fall semester at UCLA. This left him with an interval of about 4 or 5 months to wait. As you (the reader) have probably discovered by now, Woody is not one to sit still and do nothing. He didn't want to take a job in industry under the delusion that it would be permanent, so he took a civil service test and got employment at the Amarillo Air Base. Woody had good secretarial skills and was still a shorthand whiz. By this time they had lowered the speed requirements in typing and shorthand to almost nothing as employees were hard to get. As a matter of course, he got 100 points on all the skill tests. He also got 5 points for being a veteran so the total score was 105. They didn't know how to classify him. Woody was over the limits for a person to be a secretary and they finally made up a category of assistant office manager.

Woody's boss, the office manager, was very cold to him. He finally figured out that she thought he had been brought in to replace her. Ironically, she was single and having an extramarital affair with the Colonel in charge of their division. They would “have lunch together” every day. Woody finally figured out why she didn't like him and confessed that he planned to be there

only four months. Not surprisingly, that changed her attitude 180 degrees and Woody subsequently became a favorite of the Colonel because now the secret lovers could take two-hour lunch breaks instead of one, as there was someone to leave in charge during her “lunch hour.” Funny how the fickle finger of fate works for Woody.

During the post-war era, everyone was busy trying to make up for the time lost in the Army. “This is not meant,” said Woody, “to sound unpatriotic. It was just that the War took three or four years out of your life — of what should be the most productive years of your life.” Everyone, it seemed, was busy. The American businesses could not keep up with the demand because during the war, every piece of metal, rubber, etc. had gone to the war effort. It was a few years before anyone could buy a new car. Woody’s mother dyed his old Army shirts different colors because new clothes were hard to buy. You could tell which students were veterans because they all wore plain-toed shoes for several years, until they could buy new ones.

While at UCLA Baldwin finally had financial assistance in the form of the G.I. Bill. The GI Bill was a godsend for a lot of servicemen. This was the first time Baldwin had assistance in paying for his education. All his previous schooling had been paid for from his work, and there were no cheap student loans available. One had to pay up front for the education, books and other expenses. The G.I. Bill assistance just barely lasted long enough and ended the year he achieved his Doctorate degree. On as related note, he bought his first car, a second-hand Chevy; made on the payment plan of course. His second Chevrolet, a red '56 convertible, was his transportation when he moved to Boston.

Due partly to Professor Musselman’s reference letter, when still young Baldwin had been attending UCLA less than one semester, the new department chairman hired him as a teaching assistant in shorthand. Woody had not fully finished his first semester in the assistant’s position when the regular shorthand teacher retired. The department chairman asked if he would like a permanent position on the faculty. Woody says, “What a break for a guy who had not even finished his masters degree to be hired onto the faculty of such an esteemed university!”

As a Master’s Degree candidate, appointed to the faculty of the College of Business Education of the UCLA Faculty (in 1948), Woody was obligated to work towards a Doctorate if he was to teach on the college level. Woody writes, “After I started teaching in 1947, I continued my studies and got my Doctor of Education degree in 1952. I look back and wonder how I pursued a full program of graduate studies and taught a full load, but I was young and motivated, especially after starting my teaching career at



the collegiate level. A huge number of ex-servicemen went back to college after the war and since I had started teaching so young, I was younger than many of my students.”

Doctoral Candidate Woodrow Baldwin still keeps his dissertation which presents the research and findings on “History of Shorthand Instruction in Schools of the United States.” A 455 page document typewritten on one side of thin and carbon compliant paper. Dr. Baldwin’s degree is a Doctorate in Education [Ed.D.], which has a slight distinction from a Doctor of Philosophy [Ph.D.]; in that the later includes the requirement for a language proficiency. The dissertation committee that supervised Baldwin’s thesis, consisting of his primary adviser and committee members, advised him that there was no need to pursue the language requirement, considering that shorthand was a language itself.

UCLA had recently received a large collection of books related to teaching shorthand. The primary advisor of the committee, Professor Sam Wanous, was also Baldwin’s boss and department head and he insisted on the topic of the dissertation. Baldwin hated the topic and had wanted his dissertation to be on the psychology of skill learning. He says he pouted for about a year and then finally accepted his fate and began work on the designated topic which had been forced on him. The books, over which the topic had been determined, turned out to be totally worthless as a source of research.

The eventual content of the dissertation covered the many phases of shorthand instruction and the numerous changes in their evolution from the time shorthand was first taught during the colonial days of American history until 1950. The thesis showed that shorthand was first taught in America principally by the apprenticeship and individual study methods. The business college, public high school, and college became dominating influences only during succeeding periods — that during colonial times, shorthand was used mainly for reporting sermons and public speeches and only when the typewriter was invented did shorthand become an office tool. Baldwin covered the many hundreds of shorthand systems invented, from the first major system introduced in America by Isaac and Benn Pitman to the system of John Robert Gregg.

Baldwin did manage to include some of his originally desired thesis topic by expanding on how little is known about the methodology of teaching. Around 1920 psychologists began to study the principles of skill learning because there had been no means for dispensing information prior to that. Teaching methods changed from stress upon rule memorization to rule application, from isolated word drills to contextual word drills, and from writing to reading as the major learning activity.

Professor Baldwin concluded in his thesis that one of the greatest advances that had been made in shorthand was training in transcription. The purpose of the course is to train stenographers to transcribe shorthand notes onto the typewriter rapidly and to produce copy ready to be mailed. As early shorthand teachers were trained in business colleges; and, while they were skilled in writing shorthand, they knew little about teaching methods.

A small consolation to the young Professor was the fact that the dissertation became required reading material for the graduate course taught by Professor Wanous. One could also assume that the Department Head pushed Baldwin to write the thesis to avoid doing the research himself. The cost to the doctoral candidate to produce the thesis give an interesting perspective to modern day costs. On May 1, 1952 the bill for professional services rendered reads 116 hours @ \$2.50 per hour. Not a bad rate by today's standards. Although the thesis was required reading, Baldwin received no royalties from the copies.

Professor Woodrow W. Baldwin loved teaching at UCLA. Besides teaching, he was involved in many student activities and thoroughly enjoyed the interactions with the students. He was sponsor of the Southern Campus Yearbook, faculty sponsor of the Crew team, member of the Chancellor's advisory committee (two faculty members, two from administration and 2 or 3 students), sponsor of the Chinese Club, and sponsor of the Business Education Club.

The UCLA Mardi Gras was an annual event sponsored by fraternities, sororities and independent groups to raise money for a Kids Camp which UCLA ran during the summer. Normally not given to making prideful statements, Woody wrote, "I am very proud of the fact that I was twice selected as UCLA's most popular professor. One of these carried with it the title of 'King of the Mardi Gras.'" In the 1955 Yearbook there is a photo of Professor Baldwin on the ceremonial throne with robe and adornments. The very run-up to the event, with the ranking of 1st place, 2nd place and so forth, merited much attention on the campus:

Dr. Woodrow W. Baldwin displaced Capt. Richard Hurley as leader in the Mardi Gras King contest with 6,083 votes to Capt. Joseph Conte's second place total of 3,856. Hurley was in third place with 3,521 votes. Deadline for the Mardi Gras King Contest has been extended until today so that interested Bruins can have more time to push their favorite professor to the top. The faculty member chosen as king will present the award for the best decorated booth and the other booth awards will be given out by the movie star to be disclosed next week.

Letters from former students show the love and respect Professor Baldwin received from his students. One student wrote:



Dear Mr. Baldwin, In my opinion you are the ideal professor. You conducted the class intelligently and efficiently and at the same time created an atmosphere of friendliness — I have never before seen an instructor that possessed all three of these qualities. If I ever hold a responsible position in life, I will try to conduct myself and my actions in the same manner that you do.

Another student wrote, as part of a written response to a request, from the students, for course improvement ideas:

The major reason for the success of the class is your attitude. You have an excellent approach to the students. At all times you remember that we are human beings who have lives outside the school-room. You encourage us to express our ideas in the class discussions and to enjoy ourselves during the class sessions. You speak our language. You have accomplished something which only the best teachers can accomplish. You have won the respect and admiration of your students because you are a good teacher. At the same time you have won the enthusiasm of your students because you are a good “guy”. I think the course is fine just the way it is.

Baldwin says “The downside of the teaching job at UCLA was that he was the junior member of the department, and it would take a full career lifetime to ever advance to department chairman.”

Baldwin’s teaching style was very informal and he showed interest in the students. He made a point of noticing things like a new engagement ring and would compliment the student. Baldwin taught technical subjects within the Business Education Department. Students seeking a Business Administration major also took his courses and at UCLA these were considered elective courses. Later on, at Simmons, the courses he taught were required. At UCLA he was teaching teachers how to teach. Often they were older and could actually have had more direct teaching experience than he did. This presented a challenge for the young Junior Professor. How to keep interest, engage the class, and not be seen as a know-it-all. He avoided attempts to impress. As a grader, Professor Baldwin had a reputation for being tough and picky but fair and likable.

Baldwin was friendly with the students. Enough so that he did encounter one nuisance “crush” with one student at UCLA. The young lady was quite difficult to ignore and it took all his skill to make it clear that her grades were dependent on her performance, not on how much affection she tried to show towards the young professor. Later, at Simmons College, he was one level removed from the students, by being Dean of the Department, and didn’t have that kind of problem again.

There were other problems to deal with at the time. McCarthyism was rampant with thousands of Americans accused of being Communists or communist sympathizers and subject to aggressive investigations. Suspicions were often given credence despite questionable evidence, and the level of threat posed by a person's real or supposed associations or beliefs was often greatly exaggerated. In many cases, simply being subpoenaed by one of the committees was sufficient cause to be fired. Many people suffered loss of employment, destruction of their careers, and even imprisonment. Suspected homosexuality was also a common cause for being targeted. The hunt for sexual perverts, who were presumed to be subversive by nature, resulted in thousands being harassed and denied employment. Blacklists were at work in universities and schools at all levels, and in many other fields. As college professors, Baldwin and his colleagues were carefully watched as persons of influence whose words or deeds could be in any way interpreted as Communist.

For Professor Baldwin, the witch hunt was "scary as hell" as he was just starting a teaching career at UCLA. Entrapment was used constantly by the police, and gays were afraid to make an issue of it because they could lose their jobs. It was a tragic time for a gay man to live in Los Angeles, and Baldwin had moved to L.A. because he thought it would be the best place to be; a place where he could be comfortable in his own skin. To be arrested and severely punished you did not have to be caught in a sexual act; you had merely to be present at a gathering of gays to be prosecuted. Two of Baldwin's best friends were arrested.

One of his college roommates, Joe, was attending a very proper cocktail party where nothing outlandish (no sex was taking place) was going on. It was in a second floor apartment and the police used ladders to enter through a bedroom window. They arrested everyone there and the next day all their names were published on the front page of the Los Angeles Times with their home addresses and places of employment. Joe was a dedicated teacher in one of the high schools of the Los Angeles school system, but that was forever his last day of teaching. Not only was his job jeopardized, his entire career was down the drain. He was fired immediately, his family now knew he was gay, and shortly afterwards he committed suicide. This scenario with slight modifications took place all over the United States. Suicide was not uncommon in those days.

Woody's best friend from Amarillo was arrested (he doesn't remember the exact circumstances now) and this friend wanted him to come to the court hearing. Woody did attend the hearing. The friend was lucky; he got off with a fine of \$1,000 and a \$1,000 lawyer's fee. This was a lot of money in those days, when a new car would cost less than \$1,000. His name was not published so



he was able to continue his job as assistant choir master and assistant organists for one of the most prominent churches in L.A., which was attended by many movie stars. His position as a musician instead of a teacher, and his association with the upper crust of society, may have been a large influence in his being able to continue his career.

Woody arrived in Los Angeles before his Navy friend Russ Jenter, but not by much. When Russ joined him in L.A. after such a lengthy break in their friendship, housing was so tight that they first rented just a room. Apartments were out of the question. Woody's Army buddy and mentor, Brockbank, lived with an older woman who owned a big three-story house who rented rooms and small apartments. Student, and later Professor, Baldwin lived there off and on throughout his first six years in L.A. He and Russ later got their first apartment by moving in with a friend. Being recently divorced, the friend offered to share his very small apartment with them until they could find an apartment for themselves. That worked out all right until they finally found an apartment over a garage. Their own home. A nice setup.

The relationship was not an exclusive one for the fellows and lasted about 4 years, until 1950 when Woody broke it off. Russ never quite recovered from the shock, but the situation for Woody had become unbearable. Woody says, "Russ got on my nerves terribly, and while I was working in San Francisco in the summer of 1950, I asked him to move out before I returned to L.A." Woody says he "can't explain why he was no longer enamored with Russ." He reluctantly elucidated, "I think he over-worshipped me and I don't react well to that kind of relationship. He was too subservient." The last Christmas card Woody received from Russ said "You were the only person I ever loved." Russell E. Jenter died shortly after the last card, in 2004, at the age of 88. It is still on Woody's conscience that he hurt a truly fine man. In conclusion he says; "That's life, but it hurts." When speaking of being in love, Woody wrote in later years, "We've all been there. Maybe we've been in love two times or maybe three or even a hundred times. How many of these times do we now realize were just infatuations, sexual attractions, rebound reactions, etc., and how many were really love in its meaningful sense?"

Woody was also dating women while at UCLA, and not just as a cover for his romantic encounters with same-sex partners. Students at UCLA thought of him as a real womanizer. He was a favorite as a fraternity party chaperone because he was looser with the rules. The encounters actually brought him close to marriage again. The lady he was dating, who had a 5 year old son from a previous relationship, was a very attractive woman. In the 1953 photos from the college dances, she is the woman in the Tyrolean Jacket. She had been a student in an evening course and had invited Professor Baldwin to her place

for a drink but, as he was in a student/teacher relationship with her, he had to decline the invitation. The following semester she repeated the invitation, since she was no longer a student at UCLA, and they had a swinging affair for about six months, until Woody “just saw it was time to break it off.”

Woody hasn't had dogs or cats as part of his life but he did make an attempt to have a bird as a pet when he was at UCLA. Somebody had given him a beautiful six foot tall iron birdcage and he felt he should put something in it. For \$1.50 each he bought two parakeets and named them Aristotle and Mr. Feathers, even though he thought he was getting a male and female pair. Aristotle caught a cold so, being a proper pet owner, he took the bird to the Vet. A \$19.00 Vet bill for a \$1.50 bird is a story not forgotten and prompted him to purchase a medical book of parakeet diseases, in case there were any subsequent illnesses.

When he moved from Los Angeles he sold the large cage, empty of birds at that time, and purchased two new birds and a small cage in Boston. In that Boston apartment hot water was limited and while Woody was drawing a hot bath he decided to clean the bird's cage. Somehow the bird managed to land in the hot water and nearly drowned, not something covered by the medical book. His upstairs neighbor was a nurse who recommended an eyedropper of whiskey to stimulate the bird, and this seemed to work, followed by a few days positioned under a house lamp for heat. Woodrow didn't understand that birds need a perch or they lose the ability to grasp. A couple of days under the lamp and he had one flat footed bird, who couldn't manage a perch. In fact, the bird eventually lost his feet entirely but still managed to get around.

The third and last pair were John-John and Caroline, named of course because of the Kennedy family. When Caroline decided to peck John-John to death, Woody decided he had had enough of birds. In his later years he traveled too much as a Professor, and even later in retirement, to keep pets.

Professor Baldwin admits he did have one other significant affair with a man while at UCLA, but won't go into details as the person may still be living at the time of this writing. He does allow it lasted for about six years and ended shortly after Woody moved to Boston in 1956. The gentleman had moved in with Woody shortly after Russ left and then followed him to Boston, but he hated it there and went back to L.A. He was only a part of Baldwin's new life in Boston for a very short time. Because this fellow had not been supportive of his professional success, Baldwin was glad when the relationship ended. Professor Baldwin wanted to make the most of the good fortune of attaining a full time teaching job at a prestigious university. A non-supportive relationship would have been detrimental to the future. Baldwin commented about the relationship; “He was constantly belittling me and my



career; I guess he was jealous because he only had a clerical job in an insurance company. For a romance to be successful, I think each party needs to be supportive of the other.” For the next ten years Woody had youthful romances, but never lived with anyone.

Woody experienced a “normal” social life in Los Angeles. He says he was very career focused and the social life consisted mostly of college contacts with faculty and older students. There were three other business education chums while he was working on his doctoral degree and all were very close; even socially. Two of them went on to join Woody on the faculty and the third (who incidentally was the younger brother of Chairman Sam Wanous) lost touch with the group. They were all about the same age and their boss referred to them as the Gruesome Foursome. Woody says that, “in true college spirit they drank heavily on weekends.” Although he smoked a bit at UCLA, it never became a habit. When the regular smokers were over and bummed a smoke they always asked him how old the package was. Baldwin says he believes Bill Clinton:

The news about President Clinton’s smoking of pot became a joke because he said he never inhaled. I think I’m the only person who believed that. I did the same thing. I was in a situation where it was easier to pretend for social reasons to smoke pot. But I never inhaled.

The heavy social drinking took its toll at times and Baldwin always had the fear of losing control. He made the mistake, early in his career of wearing the same clothes for the second day of class. A student made the joking comment: “Doc didn’t go home last night.” and Baldwin was always careful from then on to wear something different each day and therefore to avoid leaving the impression that he had been out all night.

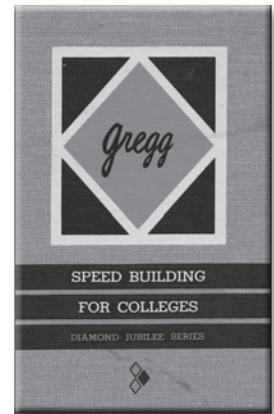
The other three professors of the department married, and although Woody kept up with them for years, two are dead and he has lost track of the third. Woody has commented more than a few times, “how strange it feels to outlive so many of my peers and even so many of the younger friends.” When he’s in one of the “old age sucks” moods, he reminds himself that “many of my friends never had the opportunity to experience life as fully as I have. They left this world too soon in life.” He lost young buddies in the World War. The loss of these friends in the war still influences Baldwin. He says he, “has not learned why humans cannot find a better way of settling differences between nations (or even within them) than taking the precious lives of innocent human beings.” Depression comes easily to him when he thinks of the wonderful, promising young friends who died in wars. He wonders, “Is one life any more precious, mine or theirs?” He doesn’t think so, yet their lives were snuffed out by war.

Woody was always a very socially engaged person, happiest when surrounded by his fellow humans and heavily involved in the growth of his immediate group. He was never one to step outside the system and try to change things in the traditional “activist” manner. Throughout his career and even in retirement Woody always chose his friends and associates carefully and worked from the inside organizations to be an active participant and to effect change where he saw it might be needed.

Professor Baldwin taught two summers (1949 and 1950) at the University of San Francisco. His students were almost all teachers and it was a delightful experience. One of the Gruesome Foursome from UCLA was also there. They were housed in student dormitories, and taught one graduate course together; his only experience at team teaching. There was an alternate offer during his second summer from the Navy to head up an educational program they wanted to start at the Oakland base. They offered Professor Baldwin a good rank as an officer and a promise that he would stay at Oakland. This was during the days of the initial major hostilities of the Korean War in 1950. It was hard to turn down the offer because there was always the possibility that he might be called back into service. A rank as an officer was far better than going back into the Army as a private again. But the career at UCLA was just getting started and Baldwin was extremely grateful for the opportunity to teach there; the start of his career in collegiate teaching. He decided to refuse the Navy offer and, of course as things turned out, has always been glad he did since he was fortunate enough not to be called back into service. Another close brush with another war in which thousands died. He has never taken for granted the twists of fate from which he benefitted.

Woody was president of the California Business Education Association. He still keeps a letter from President Reagan, who was head of the screen actors guild at the time. The letter is a short one declining the offer to attend a meeting of the California Business Education Association. But Woody thinks it is funny to have and wonders if it will have any significant monetary value for his heirs.

Woody’s original intent, when pursuing the Masters degree at UCLA, was to teach at the high school level. Beginning teaching at the University level was another one of the Baldwin pieces of luck. Although UCLA was a “publish or perish” university, and this was also the case later at Simmons College, Woody was able to stick with what he loved most, teaching. He never enjoyed research, being more of a people person, and he thoroughly enjoyed the interaction of teaching. At UCLA Professor Baldwin was involved in teaching teachers how to teach. The department was educating educators, not teaching students directly, but this still provided the people interaction he craved. Often he was teaching people older than himself. Part of his responsibilities



was to develop a Business Communications correspondence course for the University. While on the staff at UCLA he taught courses for the American Institute of Banking and did consulting work for Lockheed Aircraft Company, Twentieth Century-Fox Studios and the Crosby Foundation.

It seems inevitable that a few years into his teaching career the Gregg Publishing Company which Woody first encountered in junior college, would hear again of this shorthand whiz now established at UCLA. Gregg Publishing hired him for a summer as a ghost writer on a textbook that was being revised. That eventually led to an offer when he was at Simmons in 1958, to author the text "Gregg Speed Building for Colleges" and to write "A Guide for the Teaching of Shorthand and Transcription." The royalties from the former book, updated again in 1966, paid for the house he later bought in Boston.

PROFESSOR AND DEPARTMENT CHAIR AT SIMMONS COLLEGE

Founded by Boston businessman John Simmons in 1899, Simmons College was the first four-year women's college to combine a classical education with practical work experience. Founded in 1902, the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) was one of the first schools of its kind in North America, and remains among the most well-known and prestigious in the U.S. Simmons's undergraduate women's college today provides a strong liberal arts education integrated with career preparation. The Simmons MBA program was founded in 1973 with the efforts of Professor Baldwin and other colleagues in the field and is designed to teach the essentials of a classic business degree.

How did the shorthand whiz get to Simmons College in Boston? The president of the Gregg Publishing company, gave a speech at UCLA and invited Professor Baldwin for a drink after the lecture. By this time Baldwin had been teaching at UCLA for ten years. The president of Gregg asked if he would consider leaving UCLA for a very good job on the east coast. Although Professor Baldwin was extremely happy where he was, the offer of a Department Chair in a renowned women's college in Boston was worth at least a consideration. The president asked if he would be willing to visit the college. Baldwin said he would visit though with no serious intention of leaving UCLA. The connection with Gregg Publishing Company was something Baldwin valued also and he allowed the visit more as a way to appease the request and maintain amiable relations with the publisher, rather than snub an important business relationship.

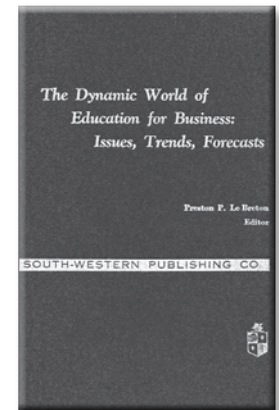
The Gregg Publishing president immediately, in Baldwin's presence, called the President of Simmons and said, "I've found the ideal person to head your School of Business." Professor Baldwin's degrees in business gave him the depth, the Gregg president felt, to chair a school of management. Once again, we see him getting the jump on the system because of his career focus and the honors awarded from his determination to succeed. References seemed to always flow ahead of him, prior to interviews or the usual system of applications. Opportunities opened which he was not even seeking. Baldwin salary as a Junior Professor at UCLA in 1956 was \$4,800 a year. The offer at Simmons was nearly double that.

Professor Baldwin went to Simmons campus and liked what he saw. He resigned as Assistant Professor of Education at UCLA in 1956, accepted the position as Director of Simmons College of Business Administration, and spent the next 26 years at Simmons until retirement in 1982. As he relates it, "My entire professional life had been influenced by my election as substitute teacher in my high school shorthand class. Talk about luck!!" But when looked at through the lens of nearly a hundred years you, the reader, can see how similar influences persisted. One cannot attribute this only to luck. He has always been engaged with his peers at some social and organizational level. He has always striven to succeed and, most often, to excel. His humorous and charming personality must be included in the list of positive influences on his luck. He remains humble by calling the chances "luck" but we can see, in the broader outline, that his own efforts were as much an influence as any concept of luck.

Woody commented in a later interview, "I survived the culture shock of moving from Los Angeles to Boston. I don't think there are two cities that are more different." Culture difference was that in California if something was new it was considered worthwhile and important, while in Boston if something was old and historical it was of greater importance.

People who know him are shocked to hear him say he was uncomfortable in a situation where he was a stranger to everyone there. Professor Baldwin was always on the go and appeared full of self-confidence. Despite his outgoing professional manners, it was not easy for him to belly up to a group of people he don't know, introduce himself and try to get into their conversation. The new city was more than a bit strange and he was challenged to overcome his uncomfortable feelings. But he says, "I was anything but shy."

When he moved to Simmons College, Professor Baldwin was allowed to teach only one course a semester, a rule that applied to all the heads of schools. This was one of the down sides of the Simmons job as teaching was one of his favorite activities. Baldwin threw away his lecture notes and teaching materials every five years or so to assure he did not develop a repetitious and boring





class style. He thoroughly enjoyed the interaction with the class and this live interaction required he approach the lectures with a freshness or the students attention would drift.

Baldwin also found it was easier to teach and keep the personal relationship with the students when he was closer to the same age. As he got older he felt a distance from them due to the age difference. One of the advantages of the changing attitude towards dress code at the college in the 1970's was the change from required formal attire, suit and tie, to simple sweater or shirt-sleeves and tie. The less formal dress reduced the social distance between teacher and student, although on days when he had meetings the suit was still a requirement.

Baldwin was brought to Simmons to change the entire direction of the Business School and he did just that. When he got there the whole emphasis was on skills and the highest positions Simmons College was training their graduates for were secretarial jobs. Simmons probably had the best reputation of any college in the quality of secretaries. As Department Chair, Baldwin's directive was to change the school from secretarial to management, as that was the trend of the time. He developed the School of Management to broaden the education and preparation of women entering the career of management. When he first came to Simmons, the School of Management as it is now known, was known as the School of Secretarial Science. It was then

changed to the School of Business Administration. The School of Management came about due to the effort and dedication of Professor Baldwin. Many alumnae were not pleased with the prospect and so his job was not easy. Baldwin had a president who was very supportive and he was able to accomplish his objectives for the School of Business.

There were many perks in the change from teaching at UCLA to administration at Simmons College; lots of travel, more pay, higher rank, more free time, flexible hours, etc. As head of the school of business, part of Baldwin's job was public relations for the department, and the college wanted Professor Baldwin to belong to and to be an active participant in management groups. Woodrow enjoyed the groups since he learned a lot about current business practices from the guys who were making the decisions. He came up through the ranks to be president of the Boston chapter of the Administrative Management Society. The Administrative Management Society was a professional management society. It promoted the application of management methods for commerce and industry for the purpose of increasing productivity, lowering costs, and improving quality. It encouraged and participated in research while promoting sound employer/employee relations. The Boston chapter was one of the largest of the AMS which was the country's largest management association. After the presidency, he was made chairman of the entire New England district. That tour of duty was followed by many years on the international board of directors. This involved a lot of travel, but the school picked up the tab (one of the perks of being department chairman). Oddly enough this institution is another of the things which Baldwin has out-lived; the Society having closed down in the late 1990's.



From the college paper "The Simmons News" and later named "The Simmons Janus" we find additional evidence of how his career consumed the majority of Baldwin's time, including much of his spare time. The newspaper mentions are:

"DR. BALDWIN ELECTED HEAD OF COLLEGIATE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION."

Dr. Woodrow Baldwin, Director of the School of Business Administration and the Prince Program in Retailing Administration was elected as national president of the American Collegiate Retailing Association. [April 22, 1966]

"BALDWIN NEW PRESIDENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT SOCIETY"

Dr. Woodrow W. Baldwin, chairman of the Department of Business Administration, has been elected president of Boston's largest management association, the Administrative Management Society. [April 12, 1966]

“BALDWIN RECEIVES AWARD”

Dr. Woodrow W. Baldwin, chairman of the Department of Business Administration, has received the Administrative Management Society's Diamond Merit Award which is given in recognition of outstanding services. [November 6, 1969]

“STUDY REAL CASES”

An innovative approach to bringing together education and the business community is being undertaken by the Management department under Chairman Woodrow W. Baldwin. A series of 13 seminars, which began on January 27, involve real case studies presented by invited organizational officials for students and faculty to discuss and solve. [February 3, 1972]

“PANEL DISCUSSES ENERGY PROBLEMS”

Business manager Walter Steere along with Woodrow Baldwin, professor of management, and Barbara Sawtelle, assistant professor of economics, participated in a panel discussion “Are you running out of energy” on February 8. The speakers discussed the energy crisis in their respective fields. [February 22, 1974]

The name of the business division changed three times during his tenure and so did his title. When Dr. Baldwin first went to Simmons he was Professor of Business, then Director of the School of Business Administration and finally Chairman of the Department of Business Administration. Quite a group of titles for a young Professor! Then the school initiated a big overhaul of the entire departmental structure, and Baldwin was Chairman of the Department of Management and Professor of Management. He was the same person doing the same business during all these growth changes at Simmons College. At a University, he would have been called a Dean. He did publish while at Simmons and amongst those were the Gregg Speed Building textbook mentioned previously and “The Dynamic World of Education” and developed the publication Readings in Business.

Baldwin developed a totally new concept in teaching business, the Baldwin senior seminar, which tied together business and student groups. The seminar involved real life analysis of business situations, not just textbook cases. This was an innovative approach to bringing together education and the business community under the aegis of Chairman Woodrow W. Baldwin. In a news article from Simmons at the time we read:

In a series of thirteen seminars which began on January 27, invited officials of organizations ranging from the unusual to the avant-garde

meet with junior and senior management students. These people from companies which rarely make management casebooks, present actual cases from their management experience which pose a wide variety of problems involving personnel, financing, and marketing. After the official's introduction of the problem, the cases are discussed first by the students, and then by management professors with students and others in attendance. Invited guests have the opportunity to sit in on all thirteen sessions, thus gaining in effect a free management course as well as possible ideas for dealing with their stated problems

Professor Baldwin also served as advisor to students; a part of his responsibilities he favored. In 1961 he took an American Express tour as a chaperone for the students. This first time trip to Europe laid the groundwork for his later research on the business climate in Europe and gave him the material for his later lectures. The trip also gave him a feel for how to travel in Europe and he consequently traveled throughout Europe, visiting all the major countries except Russia, Portugal, Spain and Finland.

He was on the Advisory Committee for Establishment of School of Education [1956-1957], the Committee on Programs and Academic Standing [1956-1961], the Executive Committee [1956-1961], the Library Liaison Committee [1960-1962], the Committee on Educational Policy [1962], the Committee on New Grading System [1962], the Subcommittee of Educational Policy to study Continuing Education/Committee on Continuing Education [1962-1966]. Baldwin served on the Subcommittee of Committee on Educational Policy to study Interdisciplinary programs [1965-1966], the Subcommittee of Committee on Educational Policy to Study First Year Programs [1965-1966], the Joint Committee of Corporation and Faculty on Organizational Structure [1965] and the Faculty Council's Subcommittee on Committee Structure [1966].

Baldwin found the worst part of the job was having to discipline someone. This was especially true of the faculty under his supervision. He compared himself to President LBJ, who wanted everyone to like him, and therefore he would avoid adversity at times when he should have been a part of it. During his tenure at Simmons he often felt if there wasn't something to worry about, then he must be overlooking something. This sensitive side of Professor Baldwin's nature made parts of his responsibilities at Simmons very difficult .

Because of his position as Department Chair of the School of Business of a prestigious women's college, Professor Baldwin, for public relations purposes, had to belong to many professional organizations. The list is rather extensive.



One would think looking at the list that they had to have a special committee to come up with some of the names. Baldwin was an extremely busy man while Department Chair at Simmons with too many assignments to include them all here. The academic schedule and what follows with it may explain his lack of any significant social life in the early years in Boston. He, like many in the academic field, found his work and his hobby were the same.

Professor Baldwin not only had a teaching career, he was also a public speaker. He spoke to many student and professional groups about business. One of his favorite topics was the student revolutionaries of the 60's and their effects on business. The 1960s saw student activists gaining increased political prominence. Although not as violent in the protests as the west coast, the Boston area was very active in the protest movements of the 1960s. Baldwin would have liked to have been more active personally, but as head of a business school, he felt an obligation to maintain as low a profile as possible. He was a frequent speaker on the subject, "Is business waltzing through the rock generation?" The era of the 1960s was when college student activists were revolting against tradition in an effort to change attitudes and he gives them full credit for the revolution. Businessmen were very nervous about what these wild kids were going to be like when they entered their businesses. Baldwin was making speeches to business owners and managers about what they could expect from the generation of college kids who were leading the revolution. The intent of the speeches was to explain what the kids were saying with their sit-ins. Baldwin wrote:

Perhaps because I was lucky enough to be working with college students during the social revolution of the 1960s, I have great respect for the rebellious students of that era. They were criss-crossing the country to fight discrimination against blacks, burning bras to get equal rights for women, pressuring corporations to become less profit motivated and more socially conscious, etc.

There are no texts remaining of the many speeches he gave (quite a few), on the subject. Professor Baldwin also spoke outside the State; in Peoria, IL, Davenport, IA, and Providence, RI, to name a few. Baldwin also spoke to teacher groups on the subject. The lecture circuit snowballed as persons would come up to him and say, "Will you give that speech to my organization?" The position as head of a Management school positioned him as someone who should be an authority. He thought it was fun and the college supported him as it was good publicity for Simmons. The position allowed him to be active in the movement, but from within the establishment, rather than fighting from the outside. Baldwin has always felt that any change to society must be made within the context of the society: by changing the way a society "perceives,"

rather than fighting the beliefs from outside. During our interviews ,Woody made a comparison with his present situation: “Since retirement and coming to Austin, I have spoken two or three times on the subject ‘Whatever happened to the good old 60s?’” With his characteristic Cheshire grin he concluded, “I loved it!”

He also traveled and taught on a wider variety of subjects. Research shows his presentations covered: Marketing Your Greatest Product — You!; European Businessmen’s Views on Business and Education. [Boston University]; You Think You Have Problems? — Listen to European Businessmen; Education for Retailing; Progressive Methods in Modern Retailing; and Must Teachers Sell Their Subject to Survive. He also gave a number of speeches about the women’s movement for equal rights.

Many of his former students have told him that he is the biggest reason for their success. He taught decision-making that is underpinned by critical thinking, advanced analytical skills, problem-solving capability in complex environments, and ethical and socially responsible management practices. In the files of the “Who is Woody Baldwin?” archives he has preserved since his retirement, one even finds a photograph from the famous dancer Vera-Ellen, principally celebrated for her filmed dance partnerships with Fred Astaire. The inscription reads, “Dear Mr. Baldwin, you made shorthand a pleasure. Thanks for being so very helpful.” A note from the current Dean of Registrars Office at Simmons recounts how pleased she was to have been a student of Professor Baldwin’s. Woody is well remembered at his College of 26 years.

At the initial interview with the president of Simmons he was asked, as casual conversation tied to the interview, if he had any plans for marriage or was he a confirmed bachelor. Baldwin replied that he, “was not a confirmed anything, although the periods of seriousness were getting further and further apart.” As his biographer this author wondered how Baldwin’s family handled his homosexuality, since by now it must have been somewhat obvious. Even today, he also has trouble defining himself strictly as a homosexual. Woody does not feel he has been limited, in his life, to loving only men. But, as he grew older he found his orientation solidified itself.

Coming from a Baptist church upbringing (and all the siblings and their children were active in the church) Professor Baldwin said he was very proud of the way they reacted to the realization that he was a gay man. It was never discussed but they all knew and no one seemed to love him any less for his sexual orientation. It was so much against their religion that he expected a much worse reaction as they eventually found out. Baldwin thinks the educational and professional background may have figured in their acceptance of his orientation, as he was the only one of the five kids who ever went to college.



They were in awe of the title Dr. Professor Baldwin, which he had earned by getting a doctorate degree. He relates the following tale:

The nearest we ever came to discussing it, Zada (my middle sister) and Leora (the youngest) were travelling in my car to Arkansas to visit my brother and oldest sister who were living there, sometime after mother died in 1966. Zada was not fond of mother and at one time she said in the car that she blamed mother for my unhappy life. I had no idea what she was referring to, and I said, "I have had a wonderful life. What are you talking about. I thank God everyday for my happy and lucky life." I made a joke of it. When we got to our destination in Arkansas I told my brother and sister about the incident. There was much silence. Leora called me back in the bedroom and told me I should stop making a joke of the situation or Zada would say something I would wish she hadn't. I was grateful to Leora, as it had never occurred to me it was my homosexuality Zada was referring to.

Woody and his mother were very close. His sisters thought he was a bit of a "mama's boy" and was overly favored because he was the youngest. Woody still has his mother's stern portrait near his favorite easy chair, and he thinks highly of her and the efforts she made to raise him properly.

Professor Baldwin gave up the Department Chairmanship in 1977 and went back to teaching for the last five years of his employment at Simmons, until he took early retirement in 1982. This was partly due to the introduction of the new president at Simmons. When the school had changed from "schools" to "departments" he continued to serve as department chairman, but the reason he had been brought to Simmons was already a fait accompli. The new president at Simmons had never witnessed Woody's significant accomplishments and never gave him the respect he had been accustomed to receiving. This contributed to his deciding for an early retirement from being Department Chair. The department needed somebody who could negotiate budgets, class sizes, salaries and such with the new President. Due to the friction between the President and Baldwin, Woody felt the department would suffer if he stayed as head of the department.

The friction started when Woody was first introduced to the new president with the compliment (meant for Woody) that if one wanted an honest answer then just ask Baldwin; that Baldwin was the one on campus from whom you could always get the truth about anything. Somehow this made new president Bill Holmes feel threatened by Woody's elevated status at the college. Partly, Baldwin says, he was tired of the position since it involved handling lots of inter-departmental complaints and putting out structural and personnel fires.

He enjoyed teaching and wanted to end his time at Simmons on a positive note and the new President would obviously make his life miserable if he retained his position as Department Chairman.

The new president did make him miserable, even to the end. All the other department heads, while Baldwin was there, who retired under President Park (the previous president) were given an honorary degree from Simmons. Although certainly deserving the honor; Professor Baldwin did not receive one from the new President Bill Holmes. An unfortunate circumstance, as it left Professor Baldwin with a hurt which continues to this day. Fortunately he does not dwell on this slight too often, but when he spoke about the time I noticed his sadness. On a more positive note: before his retirement when he returned to teaching, the new department head (his old job) was very respectful to him, unlike the college president, and acknowledged the great advancements Professor Baldwin had brought to Simmons.

Bruce Warren, from Simmons College, was a source for this incomplete section regarding Baldwin's professional life. He is also the only one from Simmons to have kept in regular contact with Baldwin following retirement. Professor Baldwin hired Bruce to the college staff over 39 years ago and they have remained close friends. During his tenure under Woody he was promoted from his opening position as Assistant Professor of Business Management to Associate Professor. Warren since has progressed to Full Professor of Law and Management at Simmons. When the author of this sketch interviewed Bruce he commented, having seen the draft, that what was missing was the fact that, "Woody is the epitome of a gentleman." Warren also wanted noted that Woody was a great mentor to young faculty. Professor Warren is the Faculty Senate President for 2010 and has taken on the task of correcting the historical record of Professor Baldwin's accomplishments. The omissions on the web site regarding Professor Baldwin's role in creating the MBA program at Simmons is another area Professor Warren is working to correct. It was Baldwin's establishment of a committee to research development of an MBA program at Simmons that resulted in its eventual establishment in 1973. Baldwin appointed Warren, Henning (a Simmons Alumnus at Harvard) and others to look into creating the Program. True, it was Henning who ran with the ball, but it was Baldwin who set the game going and pointed the committee in the right direction.

Bruce Warren was appointed to be in charge of Baldwin's retirement party and came to his office and asked if he minded if they invited Woody's close personal friend Sean O'Neil to the party. (We'll learn more about this long friendship in a short while.) Baldwin replied that he didn't know whether O'Neill would come or not, but it would be all right with him if they asked



him. And he did come. This was the first inkling Professor Baldwin had that anyone suspected he was in a relationship and he appreciated the discreet and respectful way the request was presented. As the retirement was in the early 1980's there was considerably more tolerance for said relationships by that time. Nothing further was said or hinted concerning O'Neill's attendance, who he was, or anything.

At the party, with the new department head's persistence, O'Neil agreed to sing if she would sing with him. She said she would but only if the Simmons College President and his wife sang as well. The performance was hilarious, but O'Neil was the only one with a singing voice and the president's wife was smashed. She said later it was the best retirement party she ever attended. It was there that the name "Unicorn" was applied to Woody when the past president of Simmons complimented Woody in his speech saying, "If there was an animal who embodied Woodrow's qualities, that would have to be the Unicorn; a unique, rare, beautiful, and legendary creature."

Baldwin's Reading "Show Goers Group" gave a surprise party and he still has the silver punch bowl. The Lenox Singers also gave a retirement party and put on a small play, making fun of his years from childhood all the way to retirement. This was a very cleverly crafted show with the players taking parts from his years; one singing an amusing variation of "Little Town of Bethlehem" as though he was a five year old in a church play and fidgeting about while picking his nose and so forth. One couple presented a sketch about his parents singing a mock song "Oh, I did Have a Baby." and continuing with the song "What Name?" Woody remembers that one of the funnier lines was about the fact that "He'll never get anywhere with a name like that!" The group had even managed to get a letter from the mayor of Dumas, Texas, where Baldwin was born, inviting him to come to Dumas and retire. This letter is also still with him. But, Woody Baldwin remains a very private person to this day. Finding even as much as you read here about his private life was a difficult task.

After retirement he gradually lost touch with folks from Simmons. One student with whom he remained in contact, Harriet Lee Elam-Thomas, went on to become the Ambassador to the Republic of Senegal and he was invited to attend her swearing in ceremony, and he did attend. In a related news article in the Simmons Review she credits Woodrow Baldwin, Director of the School of Business, as of particular note in shaping her professional aspirations. She was accepted to the "Experiment in International Living" program which she had initially declined because she did not have the money. With the help of Professor Baldwin, who arranged a \$1000 scholarship from Boston businessmen, Harriet was able to spend the summer in Southern France. The experience whetted her appetite for Foreign Service work and propelled her

into a distinguished and award-filled career. Baldwin was always very aware of the needs of others around him and made the extra effort to assist whenever possible. This creation of a connection between business associates and an aspiring student gives insight into the kind and thoughtful man now known as Woody. Harriet Lee Elam-Thomas was last heard from while living in Florida, and the Christmas cards ceased a few years prior to this writing. Woody has trouble sometimes understanding how he has out-lived so many people. All the older colleagues from there are gone, and all his associates at UCLA have also passed away.

Towards the end of his Simmons College career, after becoming chairman of the Council on Aging in his home town of Reading, MA, he began speaking about issues concerning aging and retirement. This focus had a significant influence on his second major post-retirement endeavor, as we will see later. At 60, Woodrow resigned his Deanship at Simmons, as he wanted to teach full time for the last five years of his career. He eventually retired early; in 1982 at age 62. For the following two years he had his “Woody’s Goodies” popcorn business and later launched his significant socially activist project.



*Professor Baldwin teaching unidentified students, late 1950.
Photo courtesy of the Simmons College Archives.*



Season's
Greetings

Woodrow W. Baldwin

“Luck was on my side and I had everything
I wanted, and I loved every minute of it.”



Bostonian

LIFE IN BOSTON AND READING

A SUBTLE CHANGE IN TONE comes over Woody when he speaks of his time at Simmons and in Boston. Aside from the sense of accomplishment he feels, and certainly deserves, from his position as Dean of Business at Simmons College, Woody also exhibits a certain fondness for those years in Boston. The times were exciting in themselves but Woody was also at the period in life when fullness of career, relationships, social networks, and vibrant health came together to create a pinnacle in his life. To relate this portion of his life the narrative must step back many years; to Woody's move from the west coast to Simmons in Boston.

The Simmons appointment started in the Fall and he drove to Boston in July, in order to get situated before the work commenced. On arrival in Boston in his red convertible, Woody relates the story about driving around trying to find the location of an apartment to rent. Boston, for those of you unfamiliar with the city, has a very confusing tangle of streets in certain areas, and many are defined now as one-way. At a particular intersection, when the light was still green, Woody stopped to sort out his direction and by the time he checked the light was red again. While looking around and reviewing the map on his lap, the light cycled through green and orange and red again. The fellow behind leaned out the window and in classic Boston accent yelled, "You only have three choices," With that Woody knew he was going to love it in Boston.

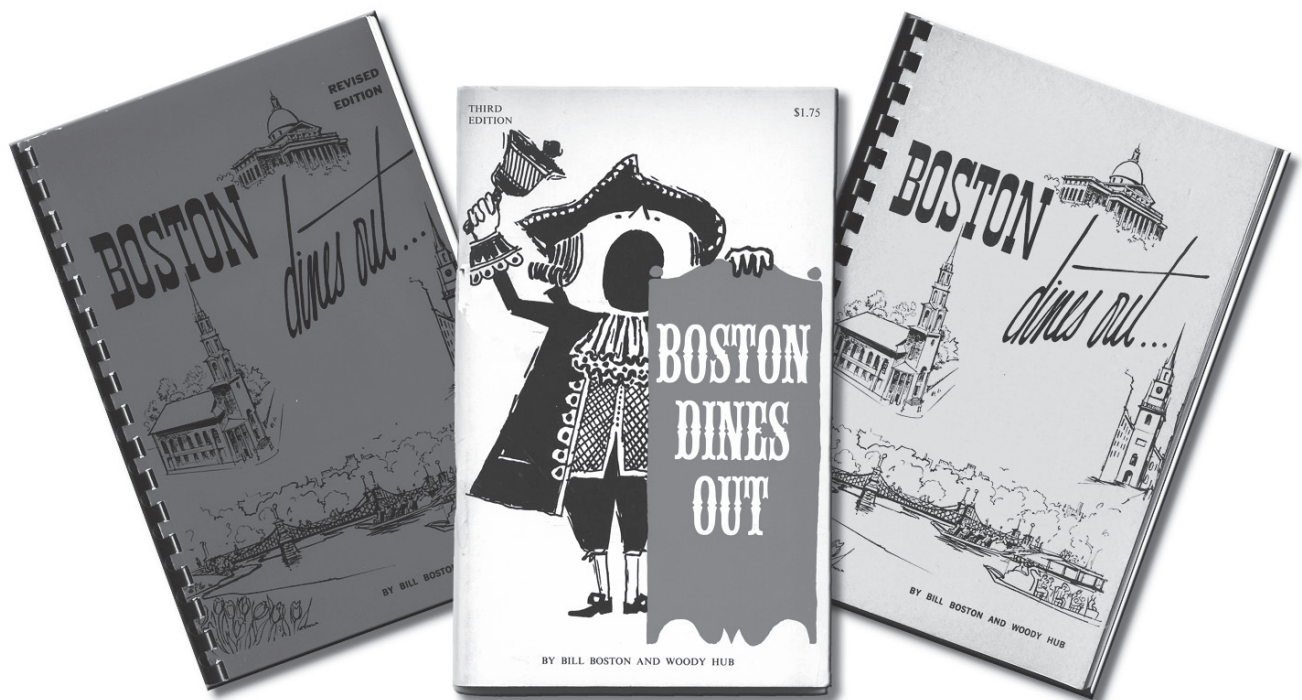
Amongst his many noted achievements within his VITA is that of author and publisher of "Boston Dines Out" under the pseudonym of Woody Hub, as probably the outstanding authority on Boston restaurants. Professor Woody Baldwin decided in the early 1960's that Boston needed a restaurant guide, so he collaborated with his good friend Bill Bonomi to write, publish and distribute a booklet named "Boston Dines Out". They used the pseudonyms of Woody Hub and Bill Boston. Because Boston is known as the hub city, Bill Bonomi took the name Bill Boston and Baldwin became Woody Hub. The first issue went on sale in 1962, the second in 1964 and the final issue (72 pages) in 1966. Profits from this endeavor were negligible, but the expense of dining out (research!) was a welcome tax write-off and they broke about even with the financial costs. The authors tried to identify the most popular dining moods and needs, and the book listed restaurants accordingly.

The book was an attempt on the part of the authors to tell you about one segment of Bostonia in the hope that others might enjoy their home town. The book merits the classification of a labor of love. There were no fees or bribes pocketed by the authors for any listing. Only a handful of the restaurant owners even knew who they were and all the write-ups were done anonymously. They did not attempt to rank the establishments, nor any attempt to classify the restaurants by cost. They gave little attention to luncheons but included a hint as to the appropriate manner of dress. The closing paragraph reads:

All this is by way of saying we have dedicated ourselves to the task of helping you to find pleasure in dining out in Beantown. If this book accomplishes that objective, then all has been worthwhile. If not, we shall try next time to write a book on Tiselius Electrophoresis (whatever that is).

Woody did the writing and organized the material for the critique and did the planning on where they should go to eat. Bill proofed and organized the printing and distribution directly to book stores, hotels and gift shops. There was no other restaurant guide like it in Boston at the time. The partners made the unfortunate decision to involve a distributor in the third edition, which was becoming a phenomenal task, but the distributor failed to get books out on time and into shops. With that, and other new interests, Bill and Woody let the project go.

Woody Baldwin loved the old, classic and historical environment of Boston and had three classic New England style apartments in Boston before he bought a house. Most of the apartments at that time were in buildings that had been elegant family houses in the old days. One flat was what had been the dining room in an old mansion. It had scads of wood paneling and stained glass windows. Woody loves wood! He also loved the waterfront of Boston and



would often walk there on Sunday afternoons. He discovered that people were living in one of the old stone warehouse buildings and thought, “if someone lives on the waterfront it must be me”. When the lease on the existing dining room apartment was up, he moved to a hotel to wait for a place in the warehouse to open, and one finally did. Woody loved that apartment. He could sit at the front windows and watch the fishermen unload their catch at the next wharf while he ate breakfast. He lived there for four years and says those were some of the happiest days of his young career in Boston.

Woody quit drinking anything but a single drink when he was in Boston. The wharf building was a big party building. A fun party style at the time was the progressive dinner party; moving from one flat to another for each course of the meal, and usually with liquid libations along the way. Woody was partying with a regular group of fellows who would down a fair share of martinis before dinner during these progressive parties or when in somebody’s home just before going out. Two weeks in a row, at the usual weekend gathering, he passed out from the alcohol and missed dinner. He had a “staff meeting” with himself and determined he had to cut his consumption to just one drink, and has continued that practice till the present day when he can’t drink at all because of the various medications he is taking.

During the early years in Boston Woody spent most evenings at conferences, business association meetings, campus functions, and even adult education classes. He never brought work home though. In later years, when he settled

down with a full home life, he removed himself from so much business night life and began to have a more active social life, often entertaining at the house and certainly eating at home more often as now it was not an empty home to return to each evening.

Woody eventually bought a house in Boston, a 5-story typical row house, the kind Boston is famous for, with a bay window on each floor. The address of the house was 98 Pembroke Street. It was full of renters (all older people) but he emptied the two top floors and made an apartment for himself. He spent \$35,000 in remodeling (a lot of money in 1968) but was lucky to get a good contractor and carpenter. The carpenter was a 50-ish hippie, but a true artist who loved to work with wood. Yes, Woody and the wood again. This hippie carpenter would not tell you what he was going to do; he was creative and did his best when left alone to his own artistry.

The building was in the South End section of Boston. The initial plan on the Pembroke apartment was to convert the building from multiple small units to two single floor flats, keeping one for himself and renting the lower flat. Over time he had managed to empty the apartments until only two old ladies remained. In Boston the rent control and eviction laws are very stringent and so Woody volunteered to help find an apartment for one of the ladies who was wheelchair bound. After extensive searching he still could not find anything affordable with access. The other little old lady was very disappointed in the proposed plan as she really liked him and said to a neighbor, "I just planned to spend the rest of my life with Mr. Baldwin." Well, that was all it took and between the two of them Woody gave up the idea of doing the conversion. But since no good deed goes unpunished, he ended up with a tenant who refused to pay rent and was impossible to evict and finally drove him crazy enough he decided to sell and buy a house in Reading. When Baldwin sold it in 1977 the price was \$72,000. A friend sent him a clipping from the Boston Globe in January of 2006 to let him know it had just sold for \$3,612,500!

Woody says more of his retirement income comes from his efforts in Boston fixing up houses and selling them, than from the retirement savings of his teaching career, even though he was a conscientious saver. During his early years at Simmons, from around 1968 to the early 1970's, there were areas of Boston going through gentrification. One could buy an old house or group of flats for a very reasonable price, make cosmetic changes, and sell it again for a tidy profit. The area Woody bought the Pembroke house in was such an area and the Pembroke house gave him his introduction to working with sub-contractors. He never attempted taking on projects with major structural problems and left plumbing and electrical to the sub-contractors. His talent was in paint and wallpaper and floors and window treatments. He refurbished three or four and invested most of the money, rolling



it eventually into lifetime annuities which currently provide a good steady income stream in retirement. The remainder of the funds were used to buy a country get-away house in New Hampshire.

In the mid-seventies Baldwin bought a summer house in Londonderry, New Hampshire, about an hour's drive north of Boston. Originally a summer home, the house had been winterized by the women who owned it previously. She had closed in the front porch and used that as the bedroom but when Woody bought it he converted the unfinished attic into the main bedroom and used the front porch for day use and evening guests use on a hide-a-bed. Although situated on not quite an acre, Woody had a sign made to hang on the house which read "God's little acre — more or less." When he eventually sold the property, a condition of the sale was that the sign stayed with the house.

The land was pretty remote but he often had visitors from Boston. It was not just a summer get-away and he would often drive up for just the weekend at any time during the year. Woody was without a car in Boston for a long time. There was no need since he could either walk or bus to work and parking was always a problem. Once he had moved into the Commercial Wharf, however, he was able to buy a car again, as there was ample parking, and having a car allowed him to consider the hide-away in Londonderry, New Hampshire.

The yard was not too manageable. Somebody had planted bamboo at one time and it was a constant battle to keep it under control. A small garden was attempted but it mostly fed the local animals. One of the things Woody liked to do while at the New Hampshire hide-away was to buy old trunks at auction for \$1 or so, fix them up by relining them and adding a little paint or varnish and polish till they looked great. This was not a financial venture though, as he would just give them away.

When Woody had gone into the Army, he'd quit going to church and didn't pick up on it again until the move to Boston. While he was still a teenager, as a member of the strict Baptist church in Texas, adolescent testosterone levels carried him to such a state of constant passion: Woody had no alternative but to seek a new church. Young Woodrow didn't want his ticket to hell punched each time he even thought about that grossly sinful act of sex with someone else! At that early age he began to recognize that God was a God of love — hating people because of their sins just didn't cut the mustard. What could God possibly find objectionable about the natural needs of the human spirit, let alone a movie or a game of bridge? So, he moved to a more liberal church. He tried even another group in junior college but eventually drifted away from organized religion altogether.

Knowing no one in Boston and having nothing to do on Sundays, he thought maybe he was missing something. So, each Sunday Professor Baldwin

would go to a different church. The only one that came close to meeting his needs was the Universalist, and Baldwin attended there for a while. Even though, in Boston he could now play cards, go to movies, dance, etc.; that monster “sex” was still threatening his chances of ever hob-knobbing with angels. It was through the Universalist church of those days that Baldwin came to the vivid realization that God saw no relationship between sex and sin as long as it was with a consenting adult. His understanding of religion evolved and allowed him to be happy; with no fears of a god who tolerates hate. The Universalist merged eventually with the Unitarian church but Baldwin had lost interest in the organized aspects again, although remaining still deeply religious and knowing he was loved by God. Woody did not get interested again until later when he moved to Reading, re-discovered the Unitarian-Universalist church and became very much involved for many years, attending regularly and even serving on a committee or two. The Unitarian-Universalist is still his religion of choice (his request is for a memorial service in the UU church in Austin) but he says, “I am so deaf now that I don’t go because I can’t hear the sermon.”

Life in Boston wasn’t all just work. Woody pursued work and holidays with a passion similar to that with which he approached his career. Whenever he could combine business with vacation he did so. One time Baldwin drove his 1950 Chevy to a meeting he had in Denver and then continued on to one in Houston. After that meeting he drove out west, up the west coast, across the northern U.S. into up-state New York and finally back to Boston.

On Woody’s’ first visit to Mexico with his close friend Bill Bonomi, in the early Boston years, the holiday arrangements were eagerly established for Zocalo, in Taxco (spelling). A young Mexican boy enticed them to see the town from “up above.” Not knowing what the young boy meant they followed him to the cathedral and up a narrow staircase to the cupola. Here the fellows had to step out onto a very narrow ledge, with no railing, and proceed around the tower to the other entry. They were so frightened they didn’t dare look at the “view” and crawled around the dome facing it. At one point Woody froze and said to Bill, “I don’t want to be out here. We shouldn’t be out here.” and was obviously very scared. Bill managed to convince him to keep working his way to the door and managed to get them down safely. Once on the ground Woody declared, we need to have a staff meeting.” and they swore never to attempt anything like that again. He was adventuresome, but only within very safe boundaries.

In the early 1960’s he liked to take bus tours. He did not have a car in Boston at the time. In those days the buses stopped at all the small towns and one got to see the locals and see how they lived. In the small towns one would buy the local paper and read it between stops. One such trip was through North Dakota, Montana and Wyoming. Another was a few days in San Francisco,



then by bus up the coast, a few days in Portland, then again the bus to Seattle and a few days there before winding up with the ride to Vancouver and a few final days there. Woody said, “Buses in those days were very clean and the folks on board very nice. It was a great way to meet people and see different aspects of American life. It gave me a unique perspective.”

Woody began to attend Mardi Gras in 1978 and continued attending on a regular basis for decades. Each year the costumes became more elaborate and funny, always funny and humorous. Woody was made an honorary citizen of New Orleans in recognition of his attendance and participation and in the later years was recognized as one of the only seniors who continued to dress up for the occasion. His friend Sean O’Neil attended with him in later years but was always very last minute on preparing his costume, while Woody’s costume was always planned out well in advance.

Sometimes his work was the unique learning experience. His professional life (after college and the Army) was spent primarily in teaching. Woody had never had a 9-to-5 job. One summer he took a consulting job in New York City where he had to be in the office Monday through Friday from 9-to-5. The surge of activity caused by the crowded sidewalks and the subway was positive to him instead of negative. That experience brought to him, for the first time, a realization that he belonged to this huge thing called society. He said:

I felt for the first time that I was filling my niche in the brotherhood of man. I can’t explain it, it just happened! It may sound corny, especially to you guys who always had a 9-to-5 job. I loved the feeling that all these people (as I) were cogs in the machinery that made the world function. It takes all of us in our separate ways to make life work.

Woody began attending Elderhostel programs during his retirement, and beginning in 1985, he attended over 30 different sessions. The Elderhostel program is open to anyone over 60 and provides programs at hundreds of colleges, universities and educational institutions. The participants live on campus for a week or more and take up to 3 non-credit courses on a wide variety of liberal arts-and-sciences subjects, taught by the host institution’s faculty. Participants stay in a dormitory, eat in the campus dining facilities and have access to the educational, cultural and recreational resources of the host institution. Woody used the program as an opportunity to travel, that being more important than the courses, and as a way to meet people — taking more arts and crafts programs than ones in language or mechanical skills. He recalls attendance at David Elkins, West Virginia and Goddard College, Vermont in 1985. He went to the Wyoming in 1986 and San Francisco in 1988, with other years in Georgia, Texas, Oklahoma, Santa Fe, New Mexico and Arkansas.

The camaraderie was as much fun as the class. At the close of the classes there was usually some kind of ceremony to conclude the session and during one session Woody prepared a mock “Valedictory” speech and excerpts are included below, to show the insightful humor he found in the groups. Woody would have to revise his speech these days to say life begins at sixty and continues well past eighty.

“What are Elderhostels?” From my teen-age vantage point, they seem to be groups of older people who find their spouses more tolerable when they can get them away from home. About ten years ago, a group of wives must have gotten together to try to find a way to get their retired husbands from underfoot; and someone came up with the idea of sending them to college for a while. This seemed like an excellent idea because the fringe benefit might be that the old geezers might learn something; and anything would be an improvement. But the guys came back with glowing reports about today’s coeds, so a second meeting had to be called and it was decided the wives would go along. At least, the husbands would be underfoot in a different environment.

Planners must have heard that retirees get up very, very early, so the colleges serve breakfast at 6:30 a.m., an hour of the day that elders didn’t even know existed until they came to Wyoming. After hours to Elderhostel planners means after 9 because elders all go to bed at 9. Well, as soon as the planners are satisfied that the old folks are ensconced in this puritanical environment, they leave and then the fun begins. The old folks start telling their dirty stories, recruiting one or two first-grade teachers who have a few after-hours stories of their own, and every one whoops it up until the undergraduates complain that the old folks are making too much noise and keeping them awake.

They learn things like the advantages and disadvantages of union seniority, how to treat their schnauzers and where to look for their lost hearing aids. And these senior citizens return home far more compassionate persons because they realize that people under sixty who can’t go to Elderhostels are underprivileged and should be treated with compassion in the same way that young people pity seniors who are no longer able to enjoy going to work every morning at 9 a.m. So, if you have acquaintances who think that being sixty is over the hill, send them to an Elderhostel; and they just may very well conclude that life begins at sixty.



In 1977 Woody moved to Reading from Boston and lived there until his retirement move to Austin, Texas. He bought a classic 200-year-old house on a corner lot with ancient stone walls. The house was a two bedroom, two bath house with two small rooms which were used as offices. There was a very nice living room with a colonial fireplace and a dining room large enough to accommodate 12 for dinner. Although it was a landmark structure, and no exterior changes were allowed without town council approval, a screened side porch extension was added. Baldwin didn't know about the ordinance till after the project was completed, but nobody complained. The house had a big yard and they lived there for nine years. The house had very low ceilings, only 7 foot, and the basement ceiling was even lower. There was a hard hat hanging by the basement stairs since a trip down there invariable ended up with a head knock against something. The biggest advantage of the house might have been the very inexpensive price, especially compared to what he just sold the Pembroke house in Boston for. The house was also closer to the New Hampshire hide-away, but eventually, since it was more in the country than the Boston home, he sold the New Hampshire property.

Later in Reading he was enamored with a new development of condos created in the California ranch/abode style. But it was a mistake when he sold the house and bought a condo, because it turned out to be less comfortable than expected. As elsewhere he actively joined the association and became President soon thereafter. Prior to his tenure as President, the Association had been severely split into two factions, one side headed by the Secretary and the other side by the Treasurer. Nothing got done and meetings were quite acrimonious. In characteristic Baldwin fashion he civilized the meetings and got the Association on the right track for the 32 unit development.

One disadvantage of Reading was the commute into Boston while working and even in retirement this would have been an issue if his social circle had remained primarily Boston based. Woody is one of those who likes to be where the action is. Would living in Reading mean driving into Boston (15 miles) to go to the theater, a bar, and almost anything else? He compensated by developing a large circle of friends in Reading and the adjacent suburbs, and now that the environment was a little freer many of the friends were gays and lesbians. His social life centered primarily around these people. They would go to theater in Boston in groups of 20 or more and got special rates if there were as many as 20. Baldwin, as you may guess by now, was the arranger for many of these events, primarily because he was retired during his last 7 years in Reading.

In Boston he had been on the advisory committee of the Cambridge Center for Adult Education. He had taken quite a few classes there and per his

usual nature became engaged in the organizational aspects. Sequentially, In 1990 at age 70, Baldwin was chairman of the Council on Aging for the town of Reading, MA, and busy with the Prime Timers group (see below) which he had started in 1987.

WOODY BALDWIN AND JOHN (SEAN) O'NEILL

The 1960s in the United States are perceived as a period of profound change. Attitudes to a variety of issues saw radical change. Historians refer to publication of "The Kinsey Report" and the invention of a birth control pill as significant factors in the changes to sexual attitudes and behavior during this period; often referred to generally under the blanket metaphor of the "sexual revolution." Woody says he loved the sexual revolution of the 1960's, the same as he supported most of the changes brought about by what is labeled as the social revolution. Woody considers the 1970's to be his "good old days" from a sexual viewpoint. After having always lived in the fear of arrest and the resulting consequences, it was good to be able to have openly gay friends and meetings and so forth. He says, "Prime Timers is a perfect example of that; if we had held a meeting during the 1950's like those we have now, we could have had it raided and all of us taken to jail." For many of those likewise oppressed, the "sexual revolution" was true liberation.

Although the term "revolution" implies radical change, this was not necessarily the case. The sexual revolution in 1960's America is better described as a dramatic shift in traditional values related to sex and sexuality. Sex became more socially acceptable outside the strict religious boundaries of heterosexual marriage. But, even in that time of unprecedented change, homosexuality was still widely publicly reviled, and more often than not, was seen as a malaise or mental illness — from the religious viewpoint, as a mortal sin — instead of a legitimate sexual orientation. Indeed throughout the 1950's and 1960's the overriding opinion of the medical establishment was that homosexuality was a developmental maladjustment. Homosexuals were characterized as predatory deviants, who were dangerous to the rest of society. Between 1956 and 1965 several states sought out these so-called "deviants" within the public system with a particular focus upon teachers. This persecution of gay teachers was driven by the popular belief that homosexuals damaged vulnerable young people. Many of those beliefs persist to this day.

Woody says, "I don't know when I knew I was gay. Actually, I've always considered myself bisexual, as I love women and have had quite a few escapades with women along the way." He doesn't recall feeling guilty or remorseful about it. But keeping that facet of his life private was especially important



in the field of education at that time. Woody says the following about teaching, as a homosexual:

By the time I was mature enough to appreciate the pros and cons of being gay; I was experienced enough to realize it was my lifestyle and so be it. I realized I had to keep it a secret to be able to function and contribute to the society in which I lived. I spent the next 50 or so years living with that aspect of my life concealed. Until the sexual revolution of the 1960's and 1970's, it was very scary. If caught (or even suspected) your whole education, career, family relationships, etc. could go down the drain in a second. I don't think there was a difference in the level at which you taught — elementary or college. Homosexuality was just bad, really bad, and could not be tolerated except in certain professions. Education was not one of them. Fortunately, I never was caught, or even suspected, to my knowledge.

One did not have to be found guilty to be forever barred from teaching. Just suspicion was enough to get you relieved of your profession. He comments further, "The sexual part of my life was never and has never been an all consuming aspect of who I am."

"My career, and the business and social lives thereby entailed, were very important to me." says Woody, "The nature of the times was such that I could not be open about my private life. I am, as far as I know, completely

non-judgmental and open-minded about the sexual thoughts and actions of other people. I am sure we have all done things in the past that we would not want to discuss with our best friends, let alone with a casual acquaintance.”

Woody, who found himself in the uncomfortable position of being a Professor with this frame of reference, the only way to participate in what for him was a normal sexual orientation meant travel to New York City where he was not a well-recognized public figure. In that city, he was far enough away that his entire career was not as acutely in jeopardy. But it was not entirely safe to go out in New York in those days. During that period New York was so “hot” that bars were being raided and people arrested. Police raids on gay bars were frequent—occurring on average once a month for each bar. The now famous raid on the Stonewall Bar, on a Saturday in June of 1969, became a symbolic call to arms for many. In the mid-1960s, more than 100 gay men were arrested every week in New York City.

One enterprising gay fellow had bought a brownstone in New York and made it into a private club. Woody says he never understood why this particular private club was immune to raids and subsequent arrests, but it lasted until Mayor Lindsay was re-elected. At this club Woody met the love of his life, Sean O’Neill, the man with whom he eventually lived for the next 37 years. Just a few weeks shy of Woody’s 47th birthday, February 25th 1967, Woody Baldwin and Sean O’Neill were introduced, by a fellow who had met both of them on different occasions at a straight nudist camp in Pennsylvania. Woody says, about the first meeting with Sean, “I guess you would call it love at first sight. We were delightfully happy for 37 years.” His close friends in Boston agree; commenting that prior to meeting Sean, Woody had always been a reasonably cheerful and fun guy, but that after Sean came into his life Woody became radiantly happy. He had been in Boston for 11 years before he met red-cheeked Sean. He continued to date women with some seriousness until he met Sean, but after that his relations with women were purely social.

After the first introduction, Woody took the initiative and wrote a very short note to Sean: “Someone likes you. It may be [and here is pasted a return address sticker.] Woody still has the small note. He looked for a reply and was surprised, having expected perhaps a longer note, but happily pleased, to get Sean’s note which read; “I hope so.” Sean’s handwriting was terrible and kept him from writing lengthy responses during their letter writing courtship, when they wrote nearly every day. Woody replied with an invitation to Sean to come to Boston and the courtship commenced, lasting for six months till Sean left New York for Boston. During the courtship they didn’t talk by phone a lot, instead they wrote each other every day. They were back and forth between weekends in New York and Boston and missed only one weekend together during that period.



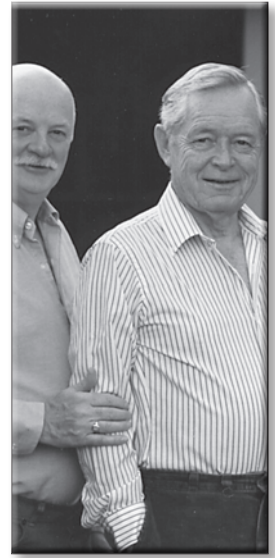
Woody spoke of his relationship with Sean: “Our different personalities was probably what caused us to have such a happy relationship; we complemented each other, and both of us lived better lives because of it. I sped him up and he slowed me down and that was what both of us needed. We were the epitome of opposites attracting.” He thinks one reason they were able to have such a long and happy life together was, although they had a shared life together, both still respected each other’s rights to have a private life. He says, “We were always 100% supportive of each other’s activities.”

When they met, Sean was very shy and full of inferiority complexes. He changed jobs frequently because he could not ask for a raise or approach the boss on anything. O’Neill would just go to lunch one day and not show up again. He lived in New York in near poverty. Sean allowed himself one beer a week at a gay bar and would make that beer last all evening. Sean was very thrifty, a good saver and budget keeper and kept up their bargain on managing living costs throughout their entire relationship.

Because of Sean’s shyness, and never staying on a job very long, changing jobs was simple enough for O’Neill. But Sean wanted to discuss financial arrangements before he agreed to move to Boston as Professor Baldwin would be making much more than he ever would. Woody told O’Neill all he asked was that Sean work and make up the difference between Baldwin living alone and Sean living with him. That was the last time in 37 years finances were ever discussed between the two. After moving to Boston, Sean got a job at a bank in Boston and stayed there 10 years, until Woody hired him away to help with “Woody’s Goodies.” Woody had a hard time making Sean stay at his job at the bank. His boss was a real jerk yet he had a job that gave him a lot of independence. He was the head file clerk in the Corporate Loan Department. Woody thinks the stable relationship gave Sean a confidence he had not felt before and he retained the position because he felt secure at home.

Sean had virtually no self-confidence when he met Woody. On the other hand, Woody has always been a joiner and very active in professional organizations. He always appeared full of self-confidence. Sean saw stability in Woody while Woody wondered, for many of their 37 years together, how he was lucky enough to find Sean. One of Baldwin’s life’s great rewards was to watch Sean develop an assuredness and self-esteem. Sean saw in Woody, who was a strong persona, an opportunity to find an assurance of who he was. Woody saw the ability to make a difference. Some of Woody’s Boston friends did not see Sean’s valued qualities initially and expressed their opinion that he was too unstable for Woody and would just be a drain on him. Over time they were proved wrong and people who met Sean later on took an immediate liking to him, his being a generally agreeable fellow.

Sean had a beautiful singing voice and he sang frequently at a piano bar Woody introduced him to. Prior to that he sang in the New Haven Opera Company while in New Haven High School, where he was from. Sean played classical harp for a time while in New York City before moving to Boston. At the Hotel Lenox lounge in Boston there was an older lady named Gladys who Woody knew because she played the piano for the dance classes at Simmons. Her attention-getting device in the lounge was to accompany amateur singers, and Woody encouraged Sean to sing there. O'Neill became a favorite of hers but also got along well with the other singers and was very popular with the audiences. It helped tremendously to bring him out of his inferiority complex. It was the first place where it was Sean and Woody, and not Woody and Sean. Baldwin liked that and encouraged it. Sean became much more social and Baldwin says, "Many of our friends preferred his company to mine." Singing at the Lenox Hotel in Boston was pretty much based on his natural talent. He had a large fan following at the Lennox. When he was in the spotlight he transformed from shy to self-assured.



Gladys and Woody and Sean became very close friends and she played piano in the hotel lounge all during her seventies and until two weeks before she died, at 81 years of age. After each hospital stay, she would return looking more frail and feeble than before. When she entered the lounge, you wondered if she would make it to the piano. But as the evening progressed and she played and Sean and the other customers sang, she gained momentum and at closing time she was vibrant, healthy, happy, and was inviting people to her apartment for tea and cookies.

Gladys loved music — all kinds. Sean sang his favorites from the Andrews sisters to Broadway and Pop and the '40s and '50s hit parade and a lot of Gershwin. The later was a big favorite of Gladys. She was a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, taught piano, accompanied, entertained and the list goes on. She really found her niche when she played in the lounge. She loved her singers and was happy in her role as "supportive musician". She considered her singers as her stars. Hats were her trademark. The lesson Woody says he learned from Gladys was to, "Have an interest, stay busy and think and act positively." He said, "When I go, I'm going like Gladys."

The men would still travel down to New York on occasion and a standing ovation, or at the very least, raucous applause, would normally follow a bit of singing by Sean at the piano bar. This author was shown a tape of Sean singing at a gathering in 1993 in Vancouver and Woody told me, "That standing ovation meant I'd never be able to make him take out the trash again!"

As related by Woody, "An open long-term relationship between two persons, regardless of gender, has to be built on strong love and faith. If one or

both of them worries that his partner might not come back to him, it will never work.” Woody was well aware of Sean’s enjoyment of the nudist life. They had met through such a camp’s associations in Pennsylvania. Not really as much an interest for Woody, this became Sean’s bit of independence, a place to be on his own. One year (1993) they made a trip to Europe with the main destination being “Le Cap D’agde” This is a nudist town and although of interest, it was not Woody’s thing.

Although most of their vacations were limited by Sean’s work, the two made a particularly memorable holiday on the Mississippi River. Boarding the “Missouri Queen” for seven days, from St. Louis to St. Paul Minnesota. This was a rare route as the runs were usually from New Orleans to St. Louis. and only ran twice a summer. To make the trip last the full week on such a short run the vessel would tie up at night in small towns, where local entertainers would come on board to present a show. The local talent was a kick and the whole cruise made one appreciate what life was like for the small communities on the river. The cruise director arranged a costume party and Sean and Woody were prize winners, dressed as Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. They enjoyed the pleasure of sitting at the engineers table and had a grand view of transitioning the 27 river locks on the route.

Woody was around 50 when, just for kicks, he and Sean took a night course in massage. This was before Sean’s stint at the bank and he was offered a one man massage studio in a motel in downtown Boston. It seemed to be a perfect deal. No rent, all linen furnished, etc. But it wasn’t Sean’s thing and it was making him extremely nervous so he gave it to a friend of theirs. Through Sean’s short term, Carl’s and another guy after Carl, Woody moonlighted Tuesday nights and Saturdays so they could have some time off. He enjoyed it but Carl’s successor took two weeks off during Woody’s Christmas break at the college and he worked 8 hours a day and from that learned that it is something he would never want to do full time. Woody quit the studio shortly after that.

As Woody told me in our interviews, “We [Sean and Woody] never spent a night alone unless we were on separate vacations. We were certainly in love and the faith that you won’t be losing him to someone else made for a perfect relationship.” They traveled in the same social circles except when Professor Baldwin was obligated to attend straight affairs. They had many gay and straight friends. But still, some of the circles had to be kept separate in certain instances.

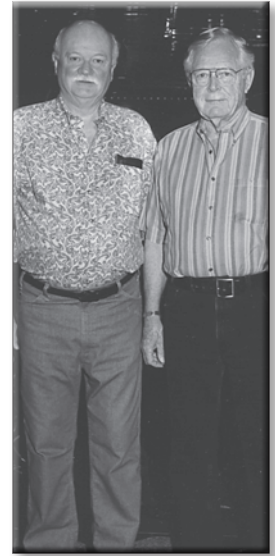
Woody tells of the time when Sean and he appeared together at the Dallas-Fort Worth chapter of Prime Timers. The evening’s topic was how to have a long-term relationship. Before the question and answer period, they would make a brief statement about what each couple considered (there were 6 on

the panel) the most important thing about a successful relationship and Sean said “trust”. Woody commented to me, “Naturally I, being more wordy, said facetiously that the secret of our long time together was that Sean made all the mistakes. I might drop and break a plate while in the kitchen, and I’d yell to him who was in the back bedroom, ‘Goddamn it, Sean’. And he’d say ‘I’m sorry’.”

Woody thinks much of the success of the relationship should rightly be contributed to Sean being so sweet natured. Even among Baldwin’s family, the influence of Sean’s kind nature had it’s impact. After moving to Austin, Sean and Woody hosted a 17-person family reunion. O’Neill was present throughout the event and never felt any resentment or dislike on anyone’s part. In later years, O’Neill was always included in any invitation Woody had to any of their homes. They were invited to the wedding of one of his brother’s grandsons. When the photographer was around taking pictures after the ceremony, at one point Woody’s brother called him over and said, “I want you to take a picture of me and my two brothers.” He stood between them and put his arms around both. Woody relates, “No one I can imagine being more straight than my brother. I was thrilled because I loved my brother very much. Sean loved him too.”

Woody and Sean thought of themselves as middle class, comfortable and well off but not wealthy. Woody was very protective of Sean’s welfare and arranged his finances so Sean would be well cared for when he (Woody) passed away. But it didn’t turn out that Woody went first and they had never really discussed or even considered the possibility things would turn out as they did because Woody was 9 years older. When Woody and Sean were first dating they were having a meal in a restaurant when a decrepit old man appeared at a nearby table. Unwashed, poor and downtrodden looking, Sean said that that was probably going to be his fate. That incident stuck strongly in Woody’s mind and he made an inner and determined resolution that he would not let that happen to Sean.

In their relationship the men showed each other affection throughout the entire time they were together. Unlike many couples, who begin to forget to show physical affection and kisses during the normal comings and goings, the two maintained a romantic demeanor. Woody says he never thought of anybody else as a better option and that they never had shouting matches or showed any disrespect for each other. People who knew them over the years said that the two were entwined, almost seen as one person. Woody said he didn’t realize, until after Sean had gone, how much of their life was a shared existence. They never fought or berated each other. Woody’s method of chastising Sean, and he later adopted the same method, was a third person reference system. As example, they had a rule that nobody would leave clothing or



leftover plates in the living room at night. On an evening when Sean left his shoes there, the next morning's comment by Woody would be, "You're not going to believe it, but somebody left shoes in the living room." This humorous 3rd party scolding worked well throughout their relationship.

Woody cooked when they were in Boston and Reading since he was the one who got home earlier. He collected easy recipes and never attempted anything fancy for meals or desserts. The exception might be a fancily decorated layer cake for the 4th of July. Their entertainment style was also not overly elegant and fussy and they did entertain a fair amount. Perhaps the fanciest Baldwin got was a party at the Commercial Wharf apartment, which was a big party complex, using a black tablecloth with white plates and red napkins. A party at Woody's flat could include 100 people.

Woody's idea of a fancy dessert was called a "Dump" cake. The gist of the recipe being that you simply dumped all the ingredients in the pan you were planning on baking the cake in, stirred it up, and set it in the oven. Even though Woody was not a spectacular gourmet cook, Sean never complained about the cooking and the reason might rise from a story related by Woody:

When Sean's father was first married, his wife tried to cook his breakfast, and he complained that the eggs were not done to suit him; so she told him he could cook his own eggs and he did for the rest of his life. Sean learned from this arrangement to never complain about someone else's cooking. The incident may have worked to my advantage because Sean never complained about my cooking no matter how bad it was.

Once they moved to Austin Woody called a "staff meeting" and dictated that now Sean would have to do half of the cooking. But neither of them really liked cooking and eventually they abandoned the effort and ate out most of the time. Austin was the first time they were with each other 24 hours a day but they adapted well to the new arrangement.

The AIDS epidemic impacted Baldwin and O'Neill the same as others who were lucky enough to avoid infection. They lost many good friends to the disease. The reasons for visiting New York frequently were squashed, so they spent more time in Boston and the surrounding areas. "The AIDS epidemic scared the hell out of us," said Woody. "For a few years we had to stop having relationships with each other until the testing procedure, still primitive at first, revealed that both of us were clear of danger." Woody commented that the pulling together of the gay community (especially the lesbians who were not affected) was phenomenal. Both Woody and Sean did volunteer work with AIDS projects. Sean, until he died, worked in a food kitchen and Woody kept up his volunteer time also, until his legs started to deteriorate and he could no

longer work. He volunteered at Project Transitions, an AIDS project in Austin and was awarded for his outstanding work at the Top Drawer Thrift Store. His friends and associates continue to find him worthy of special honors.

Early on in the relationship a financial advisor indicated it was better, from an estate management standpoint, to simply keep all the property in Baldwin's name. He did change to a revocable trust arrangement at one time but it would have made Woody's savings inheritance go to Sean's distant relative should he pass away first. Woody was uncomfortable with losing control of his ability to bequest portions of his estate and the men reverted back to simple wills. Initially Sean had arrangements to leave things to his nephew, since he expected Woody to pre-decease him, but later, when it was apparent he might not, changed to leave everything to Woody. None of the inheritance discussions were ever difficult or petulant. They communicated well and could easily explain one another's side on an issue. The resolution was always based on the health of the relationship, not on the need to make a point or win an argument. As they grew closer together, they just left everything to the other.

Woody was the "decider" but he accomplished this by giving Sean two or three choices. Although Sean was obviously not the head of the household, he was not subservient to Woody. The relationship was an equal participation, but with Woody usually being the lead. Both men were avid readers and would be found more often curled up with a book than in front of the TV. Neither gentlemen was big on watching a lot of TV.

Woody met John T. "Sean" O'Neill when he was 47 and Sean was 38 and they shared a life together for over 37 years. Woody refers to Sean as having left, not as having died or passed away. Although Sean was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis, the real cause was probably from asbestos poisoning. As a child the family lived near an asbestos plant in Connecticut and the proximity of the plant exposed Sean to very high concentration of the toxic substance. Eventually the plant was shut down because of this, and there were a few law suits successfully pursued, but in Sean's case the damage was already done and the symptoms had appeared too late for any monetary compensation. He was also diabetic and that had further weakened his system.

In Austin, Sean and Woody attended "Slam Poetry" readings, which was a weekly contest held in different clubs. Woody's loss of hearing has made it impossible to continue to attend. When Sean died the group arranged the entire memorial program. They prepared all the food, arranged the hall, and one fellow, who had been asked ahead of time by Sean, gave the eulogy. The group canceled their regular performance so they could have the memorial on the regular night and therefore allow all the regulars to attend.



Woody says the only time they ever argued was near the end, when he was trying to get Sean to switch to a different doctor. Woody didn't think he had been getting good care for the last few years, from their then current physician, and still feels that with better care Sean might have had a few more years. Woody wanted no new relationship after Sean left. He feels he is too old to give anybody a good relationship as the time would be too short and he doesn't want to be a burden to anybody. The author of this sketch disagrees and feels Woody is still very capable of providing a good partnership, but that view is from my limited perspective. Woody has been right about so much in his life one would suppose he knows himself well enough for this decision too. Sean's and Woody's ashes will be co-mingled in the grave plot in Austin and both names will be on the gravestone. This is fairly new for somewhat conservative Texas.

“WOODY’S GOODIES” — THE POPCORN PROFESSOR

Assured and dignified, Professor Baldwin serves each customer with dispatch, a ready smile, and a courteous “Thank you!” The headline of the Daily Evening Item, Lifestyle Section (Lynn, Massachusetts) reads: “Woody Baldwin taught college business for 36 years. Now he sells popcorn.” Professor Baldwin retired early, in 1982 at 62 years old, but wanted to try his hand at running a business. For years Dr. Baldwin had taught how to run a business, and now wanted to see if he could manage one himself. He had a few parameters: he wanted it to be small, he wanted it to be outside, and he wanted it to be in a people environment, thus “Woody’s Goodies” was formed. It’s a career he chose with great care, after much planning.

“I retired early so that I could work at something different for about three years afterward,” Baldwin said. “I knew I no longer wanted to teach and I did not want to be a consultant. I wanted to be free in January, February and March, and I wanted to be outdoors.” He got a glimmering of his final choice one day in Minneapolis. Another important plus: he meets new people and makes new friends. “It’s really a social thing,” he says. His business objective is modest: “To earn enough money to maintain my standard of living.”

“If I were to give a lecture on second careers,” Woody says, harking back to his days in the classroom, “I’d first point out that people of retirement age probably won’t find what they’re looking for in classified advertisements or employment agencies. I’d suggest that others try what I did; I made a list of the things I thought I’d like to do. Then I did market research. For instance, one possibility that appealed to me was selling hot dogs and such at special events,

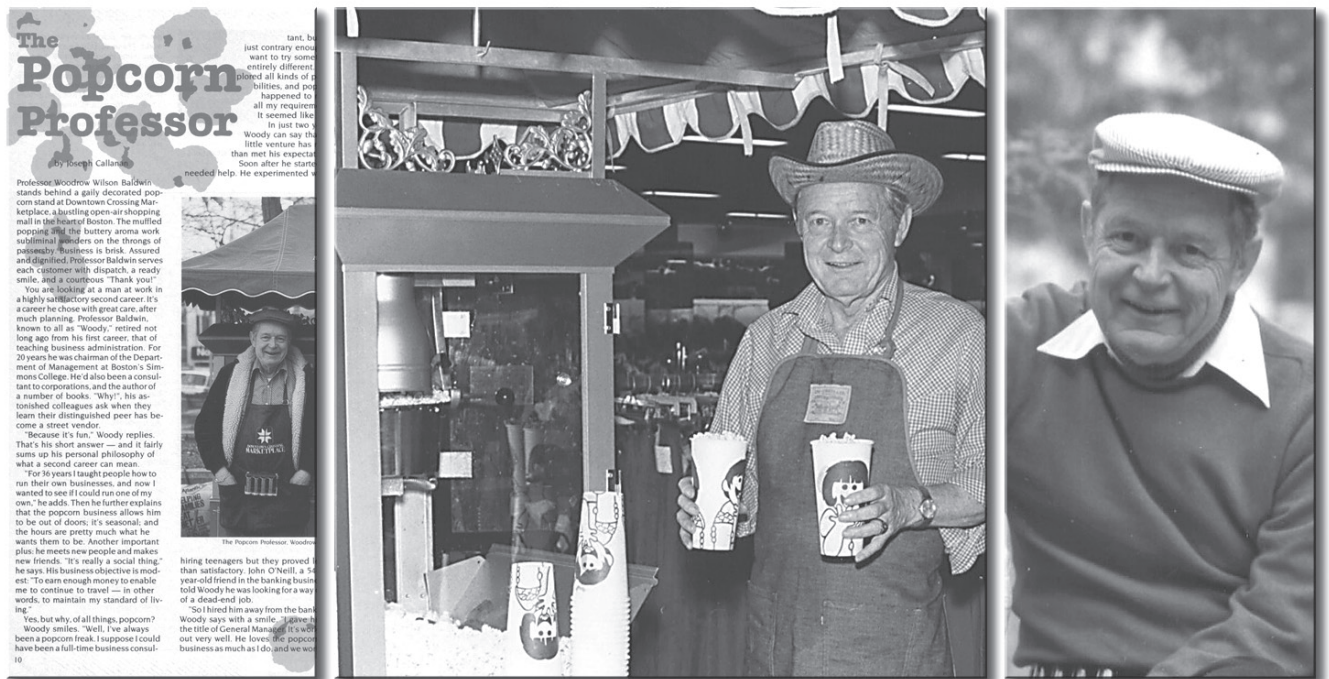
such as Little League ball games, so I visited the police chiefs in a number of neighboring towns and asked them about it. They discouraged me — too much competition already in place.

“The popcorn idea occurred to me long before I acted on it, on a trip to Minneapolis where I saw two girls selling popcorn from a fancy cart and thought ‘Gosh, that looks like fun.’ At that time, I didn’t go any further with it. But later, I read a book on changing careers that said you should decide what you want to do and then sell somebody on the idea. I remembered those young women in Minnesota, and decided to write a letter to the president of Filene’s [Department Store], asking him if I could set up a ‘popcorn boutique’ outside his store, and he ended up saying yes.” For a small initial investment (\$2,000 for the cart, complete with electric popper and green awning, and \$200 for supplies), he’s established a going business well suited to his present aspirations and needs.

“After 36 years of telling people how to run a business, I wanted to see if I could do it myself,” Baldwin says. “Now I know I can. I have everything here that you would in any business, except on a smaller scale, like cash flow problems, ordering supplies, forms to fill out for my employee.” The notion that a person’s second career need not be circumscribed by past trade or profession, that it can and indeed should be fun seems to strike many with the force of revelation. “You’re an inspiration!” a doctor from Wisconsin told Woody

Once people knew his background as a college professor, Baldwin attracted a lot of attention. Former students and colleagues visited him at his unconventional new post and spread the word. A story appeared about him in the nationwide business magazine “Saga,” and he was featured on NBC’s “Today” show [link]. After the Today Show he became an overnight celebrity, an experience he thoroughly enjoyed. Baldwin said of his notoriety as the Popcorn Professor, “It was almost as much a social experience as a business.” People from as far away as Europe, South Africa, and the Caribbean come looking for Woody, eager to buy a cup of popcorn and discuss his ideas about retirement.

Despite his reluctance to do consulting work, Baldwin found himself becoming a “sidewalk consultant” to people who sought him out for advice. Many people told him his decision to work at something completely different gave them new hope for their own retirement plans. Soon after he started he needed help. He experimented with hiring teenagers but they proved less than satisfactory. John O’Neill, a 54-year-old friend in the banking business, told Woody he was looking for a way out of a dead-end job. “So I hired him away from the bank,” Woody says with a smile. “I gave him the title of General Manager. It’s worked out very well. He loves the popcorn business as much as I do, and we work very well together. I don’t know what I’d do without him.”



The popcorn business also suited his vacation and location parameters. He was out in the fresh air, and kept to his self-imposed climate condition limits — you didn't look for him in the rain or when the temperature was under 45 or over 90, and he took the winter off. The only complaints he ever gets is when he doesn't show up because of weather. "You weren't here yesterday," went one complaint from a secretary, "and my boss was very grumpy!"

How about status, some visitors asked, "Isn't the switch from professor to street vendor a bit of a comedown?" More the contrary. He obviously enjoyed the change. This can be seen, in the video of the Today Show, when he bursts into delighted laughter as he recalls an interview with a teenage bystander during the filming of the sequence. "Would you believe that fellow selling popcorn was a professor of management at a prestigious college?" asked the NBC interviewer. "No way!", the teenager replied. From the expression on Woody's face as he tells the story it's clear that's part of the fun.

Woody said, "As usual, luck was on my side and I had everything I wanted, and I loved every minute of it." He closed the business after the managers of Boston's Downtown Crossing raised their rent from \$150 a month to \$1,500. Baldwin searched around, but didn't find another area where he could make a profit. So, he actually ran the business for only two of the planned three years.



“You are embarking on what may be the most
challenging, rewarding, and interesting
experience of your life.”



The Prime Timers Organization

THIS SKETCH CAN NOT ATTEMPT to provide a detailed history of Woody Baldwin's founding of Prime Timers, and the growth since it's inception, which is a project in itself. Undoubtedly the organization thrived because of the initial leadership by Woody. His management style; to delegate responsibility from the onset, to throw out an idea and let it run, and his willingness to relinquish control were are determining styles. And, he had the charm and wit to keep people interested.

Woody Baldwin was 67 when he started Prime Timers, which he says was the equivalent of a full time job for the first 5 years. He ranks his students and Prime Timers as his proudest achievements and says he never considered himself an activist, but he was more of one than he realizes. Never having been one to just sit around at home, he had begun directing his attention to needs of the elderly during his last few years at Simmons and was even elected as head of the Council on Aging in Reading, MA. After retirement, Baldwin wasted no time on pursuing a new goal.

Professor Baldwin had sworn an oath to himself in the early 1980's that when he retired he would do something more for the gay rights movement. He had been unable to participate in this movement while holding a professorship. Woody had a lady friend, in Boston, who was very much an activist in the equal rights movement in the 1980s. Woody told her he would like to offer twenty hours a week in volunteer services for some kind of associated organization and she introduced him to someone else who said he was exactly

what they wanted and that they would call. After some time, Woody realized the call wouldn't come. Undaunted, he approached a different organization with an identical offer and elicited an identical response. Once again, the call never came. The same experience was repeated with a third group. "Ageism," says Woody, "is one of those things you know about, but you think: it will never happen to me."

After the third tacit rejection, Woody realized ageism was happening to him and decided to go where he was wanted — to seniors' groups. One of the groups he worked with was LEGACY (Lesbian and Gay Aging Concerns), a group for older gay men and women, organized by, then Boston Mayoral Gay Liaison, Ann Maguire. To Woody's disappointment, LEGACY meetings drew an average of only four or five men. Convinced that the poor turnout was due to LEGACY's inability to attract men, and not to the lack of a need for a social organization for older men, he decided to found a group that would respond more directly to the concerns of older gay men. He shared his idea with Ms Maguire, who gave her encouragement.

Around the same time, Woody joined an exclusive men's retirement club. He and Sean O'Neill got some ideas from that organization that would later be valuable in setting up Prime Timers. They also were going to New York bars which catered to the older crowd and discussed the idea with friends and patrons there. As all these factors came together, Woody got the idea that a social organization conceived for older men to enjoy one another's company just might be the thing, so he decided to establish some kind of fully organized group to address the needs and wants of older gay men. While the organization would primarily be a social, educational, and recreational one, Woody also hoped it would have subtle political effects on younger gay men. "Younger people would see older people as active and interested, that they liked to do things, and that they cared about one another. Through increased visibility, the new generation might see that they can still have fun when they're over forty," said Woody. This philosophy has proven true and many chapters of Prime Timers now include members who are under the age of forty.

"Where do you go to socialize if you're a mature gentleman and not necessarily into the bar scene?" asked Woody. He put an advertisement in several newspapers, hoping that he might get about 20 or 25 people together for an organizational meeting. The day, August 15, 1987, turned out to be the hottest and most humid day of the summer. All older people were advised to stay indoors; not to go out because of the hot weather. Woody pragmatically reduced his self-made goal for attendance. He had, to his delight, 42 persons show up at that first meeting and it just took off after that. What was expected to be just a small local club turned into a rapidly growing large-scale organization.



Only the members of the older generation of homosexuals are privileged to understand what the sexual liberation movement of the sixties did, how it enriched the gay experience, how it brought about the ability to live somewhat normal lives. Today's young people have not had to live, to the extent the older generation did, in the dreadful fear of discovery, which in itself would almost surely ruin a career, alienate the family and turn the well-meaning up-standing citizen into a leper-like loner. Today's gay men enjoy freedoms that yesterday's young men could only imagine.

Woody declares that "one of the largest problems of keeping an organization growing is getting the word out to potential members that the organization exists. With this group of men, it is difficult to reach potential members because of the make-up of the membership. Mature men in the community tend not to socialize in the mainstream. They do not just drop by and pick up the gay newspapers at the bars." Baldwin says, "The ones who need the social interaction the most are the hardest to reach. Some members had essentially withdrawn from socializing, but being involved with Prime Timers reacquaints them with the community." One must also note that in those days there was no personal computer networking such as we have today and even no computerized mailing lists.

Woody points out that there is still a long way to go before gays can be accepted as occupying a normal place in society. But even the liberated gay society has in general turned its back on the folks who endured the greatest hardships; who fought the first battles for freedom. If the guys who fought back at Stonewall are living today, they are probably in their 70s at least. Heroes? They should be. They are written in the legend, but if today they walked into a bar populated with today's young men they would be invisible. Not only are older men not respected, they are even made to feel unwelcome in their own society.

"The battle is still on for freedom of sexual orientation and equal rights for all," Woody expounded in a 1990 interview. "As older men, we have one more battle to fight. While one minor issue is that older men often feel unwelcome in the bars; that issue is easily overshadowed by such events as the loss of a lover and/or the discovery of coming out late in life — where to go and what to do? Prime Timers was conceived to address that need, to provide those men with companionship!" Members now find this at the monthly general meetings, or at the weekly or monthly breakfast/lunch/dinner meetings, or the numerous party, museum and theatre events. Woody saw a need existed within society and did something about it. He knew he couldn't change the whole perception of the society towards older gay men, but that by changing the way they and their younger comrades perceived themselves; he could

impact, albeit slowly, a “sea change” in attitude and behavior. Woody says, “In the battle to bring the older gay man the acceptance he deserves, one person can make a difference.” Here, he says, is the important message: “It is within our grasp to be the generation that brought respect to older homosexual men.”

Woody comments that starting the organization did, in a small way, erase a guilt feeling he had about the fact that others were fighting the battles for his rights. Professor Baldwin was forced to remain hidden to preserve his livelihood and position in society. But, that was not the motivation, merely a side benefit. Even though he feels he has realized only a fraction of what he wanted to achieve, Woody does have the satisfaction of having started a worldwide network of Prime Timers chapters. He is now able to say, “I made a contribution,” and relates that “because of Prime Timers my retirement years are richer than I ever dreamed possible, and I am sure I am a much younger septuagenarian than I would have been if I had not embarked on this life-enriching commitment.” While we certainly would not consider Woody as being superhuman, we must admit he is definitely an extraordinary man!

Woody took note of the fact that in this country there are many lonely older men who have lost their long-term mates and desperately need to meet other similar men to share their experiences and to lighten their loads. Those men can’t discuss their loneliness with family the way straight people are permitted to. He also realized that there are many lonely older male couples who hunger for companionship of other simpatico men of their vintage. Many men have become very bitter toward gay society. Rejection is not easy to take with a smile. But Baldwin felt if enough of us decided we could make a difference by bringing acceptance to the older men in our community, we could make life a lot more rewarding — not only for our own generation but for coming generations as well.

At the very first meeting, in Boston, Woody issued a challenge to the members to think of an adequate name for the new organization. At the next meeting, 18 names had been submitted. Woody said that he was going to use his authority (which he says he really didn’t have) to eliminate three of those names. The group was not going to be called the “Old Farts,” were not going to be called the “Gray Ladies,” and were not going to be called the “Wrinkle Rockers.” There was a lot of discussion; some did not want the word “Gay” in the name; some did not want the word “Older” in the name. The name was chosen on the first vote. Sean O’Neil, Woody’s partner, is proud to claim that Prime Timers was his suggestion, a fact not many folks are aware of. Woody agreed it was a very upbeat name — there was a suggestion of older guys, and nothing to suggest gayness negativities — and it seemed to satisfy everyone. Baldwin himself coined the motto: “Have you hugged a Prime Timer today?”



New York was the next chapter to form and when Sean and Woody moved to Austin they started a chapter there. By 1991, they had enough chapters that Dick Bourbeau, from the original Boston chapter and the first official the first international vice president, suggested a “convention” in Provincetown and the conventions were born. The convention includes a business meeting, a board meeting, board elections, educational seminars on topics of interest (for instance, “Issues facing gay and lesbian seniors,” or “Four legal documents every gay man needs,” “or How to grow your chapter,” etc); dinners and entertainment, and an opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new ones. They usually have a meeting of chapter presidents (or their representatives) so they can have an opportunity to meet and compare practices. Other regular national gatherings were slowly added and regional events also sprang into being. The larger events include Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Halloween trips to Provincetown sponsored by the Boston Chapter, the Labor Day gathering sponsored by the Oklahoma City chapter, and the formal black tie dinner/dance New Year’s Eve celebration sponsored by the Desert chapter in Palm Springs, California, although the later has been on hiatus for a couple of years due to “technical” difficulties. The 1999 Beaux Arts Ball was the last one. It died when Wayne Paterson stepped down as President of the Prime Timers chapter in Palm Springs. Woody is hoping Patterson will run again as President — that he is an example of how a strong President can truly change the vibrancy of a chapter.

At the same time that the conventions began, the seed of the idea to create a more organized structure was planted — the club had grown too large for Baldwin to run alone. In 1993, with his extensive business expertise, Professor Emeritus Baldwin set up a business structure as a federation of autonomous chapters, a slate of officers and a governing board to carry out those tasks which were beyond the scope or capacity of individual chapters, and to provide continuity and leadership for the organization as a whole. He then stepped down as the sole president and the new board began to manage the organization. Woody is an honorary board member for life.

Early on in the organization’s history Dick Bourbeau developed the concept of adding an educational program to the normal meeting — expanding on the “social only” concept — and having a presenter. Topics might be investment, health, ageing, and so forth. At conventions the organization puts on two or three workshops on related subjects. The educational inclusion allowed for the application of non-profit status at the State level and eventually achieved non-profit status at the Federal level.

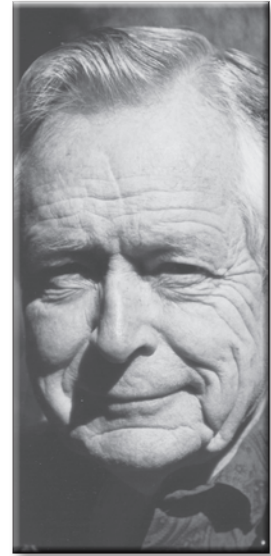
The movement to bring dignity to older men started in many small ways in the 1980’s. Woody Baldwin brought to fruition the largest self-managed organization for this purpose. Prime Timers Worldwide board exists only to

help the chapters do best whatever they want to do. Each chapter, therefore, has its own bylaws, age restrictions, name of newsletter, etc. Every chapter is different and we think that is a strength. Certainly the gay community of New York City is far different from that in Mineral Wells, Texas. “So,” says Woody, “shouldn’t their chapters reflect the community?” The monthly newsletter still keeps the membership informed of scheduled activities. All members are still guaranteed as much confidentiality as they desire. All members are encouraged to support charities of their own choosing, but Prime Timers itself is not considered a charitable organization. The leadership never discourages participation in other facets of gay life, but as an organization we do not sponsor such participation. While the organization is primarily social, members often find themselves getting more interested in gay political issues as they re-enter the gay world.

“The hope is that nobody be excluded from enjoying the benefits of Prime Timers because of limited financial means,” commented Woody. “We try to keep dues as low as possible (only to cover costs of printing, mailing, etc.) as we do not want anyone to have to forego participation because of financial restraint.” Woody attributes the rapid growth to need. There are many older gays who are aging without a partner and many who have lost their partner through death or other reasons. There are also many who never realized they were gay until they were older. “We don’t push guys to come out,” adds Baldwin. “The members determine how much if any info about them is contained in their listing. We feel that anonymity, if desired by the individual, must be protected at all costs.”

Some chapters have fallen apart on the subject of sexual activities being directly related to the chapter. When a group caters to a class (such as “gay” and “bisexual”), it would be naive to assume that there will not be instances of sexual behavior. “But,” Baldwin says, “at our general meetings mention of sex is never made except perhaps as humor.” As the Prime Timers of The Desert, one of the largest chapters, posts on their Web site: “Prime Timers of The Desert is a social club for mature gay males, providing opportunities for its members to meet, socialize and make new friends. It is strictly social. There are no sexual references or links on this site, and no sexual activity of any kind at our events.” The current Worldwide board is struggling with how to discipline those chapters who fail to maintain the guidelines set forth, a not uncommon occurrence with any large diverse organization.

Most chapters have, as a part of their roster, an opportunity for the member to indicate his interests in a number of activities. These generally include some sexually-oriented interests such as nudity, sexual focus, etc. When chapters have come to Woody for advice he tells them, in regard to sexually themed events; “Let those who want to participate do so as a non-chapter sponsored



event. In other words, it is not advertised in the newsletter. If there are those who wish to have a nude gathering; they can check the membership roster to find persons who have checked nudism, and contact them individually.” He sees this as no different than a person trying to find a bridge foursome. That is what the roster is for. Woody adds, “In our Austin chapter, as I hope is true of other chapters, this does not rule out having other organizations that cater to gays speaking to the group about their activities.” As one visitor said, “It could be a meeting of the Rotary.”

The growth of the organization also presented structural and leadership difficulties which nearly caused the complete failure of the organization, and resulted in a group split off from the main worldwide organization. In the early 1990’s, when the International Organization was still young, a negative, hate-generating administrator managed to become President by forcing the nominated President to quit in disgust. He then stacked the board with “yes men” and proceeded to try to make the organization a profit center for his own benefit and to commercialize the group. The initial direction was lost and Woody and some of the original group found the only way they could return to the positive, upbeat, loving organization that Prime Timers had always been was to dissolve the organization and then start a new one. The by-laws and rules didn’t allow any other solution.

When Prime Timers Worldwide was established under the leadership of Cal Hackler in November, 1996, they vowed to take the high road and sent a request to all the existing chapters asking them to officially join the re-done organization, and hence the word “original” remained in the corporate name. During 1996 about 25% of the chapters had been lost (more were anticipated effective January 1 and almost 50% of the independent members were gone.) Everything the founders could anticipate that would again restore the original values, to love, to care and to have fun together, and insure against another “bad apple” syndrome was built into the new bylaws. Prime Timers Worldwide carried all the “international members” of Prime Timers International until June 30, 1997, at which time they hoped those members would also choose to join Prime Timers Worldwide, as had 90% of the chapters. Most did and all but one chapter finally joined the new organization. So there is still a small organization called Prime Timers International, located in Southern California, but there appears to be no hold-over hard feelings between the groups now.

The above often elicits the question: “But don’t you get some undesirables when you have such an open door policy?” The answer is “yes” but they usually discover early on that they don’t fit and weed themselves out. There have been a few occasions when chapters had to refund the membership fee of individuals and ask them to resign. But those few instances are far overshadowed

by the rich opportunity of meeting all types of gay men from all professions, educational backgrounds and social classes

Woody said, “Creating and working with Prime Timers has been one of the most satisfying experiences a person could have.” This is not to say there have not been a few speed bumps, but they were minor ones. Tears usually roll down Baldwin’s face when a Prime Timer expresses gratitude for an organization which has changed his life for the better. Baldwin told AAA News he constantly hears remarks like, “Prime Timers turned my life around.” and “PT is the best thing that happened to us in our 20 years together.” or “PT has helped me to feel okay about getting older.”

“I want you to know, Woody, that you saved my life.” Woody was startled to hear after he had addressed one of the chapters. Woody replied, “I did what?” The fellow continued with a message similar to this:

I was on the verge of suicide I was so depressed. I was 66 years old, alone, unattractive I thought, no close friends (only distant relatives who were too busy with their own families to care about a bachelor uncle), gay, no lover, not even someone I could call to have a drink with. My counselor said, “There is a social organization for older gay men called ‘Prime Timers’. If I find out where they meet, will you go?” What did I have to lose at this point? I went and four years later I’m the happiest I have ever been. Woody, you saved my life!

Baldwin commented in one interview, “I have had few occasions in my life that have touched me more. Could it be true that by starting Prime Timers I had actually saved this beautiful person’s life! As I have visited chapters, this story has been told to me several times — only the details have differed. I hear things like: “I never needed a social calendar until Prime Timers because I had no place to go. Now I have a full social life and it is wonderful.” Baldwin added that was comments like these that kept him working twenty to thirty hours a week on the club.

Woody has said many times, “I consider myself to be merely the person who turned the key in the ignition.” Baldwin observes that Prime Timers is unique because it is the only worldwide organization which focuses on older gay and bi-sexual men. He emphasizes the need to stick to that original simple purpose. Prime Timers, he asserts, must not fall into the temptation of reaching out to all gays regardless of age. Doing so would make it an ordinary gay organization, of which there are already so many.

In an interview with the Houston Prime Timers, Woody said, “I am still an honorary member of the Worldwide board, but I am getting so old that I don’t take on as much responsibility as before. I am still greatly interested in the welfare of the Prime Timers and willing to do whatever I am able to do.”



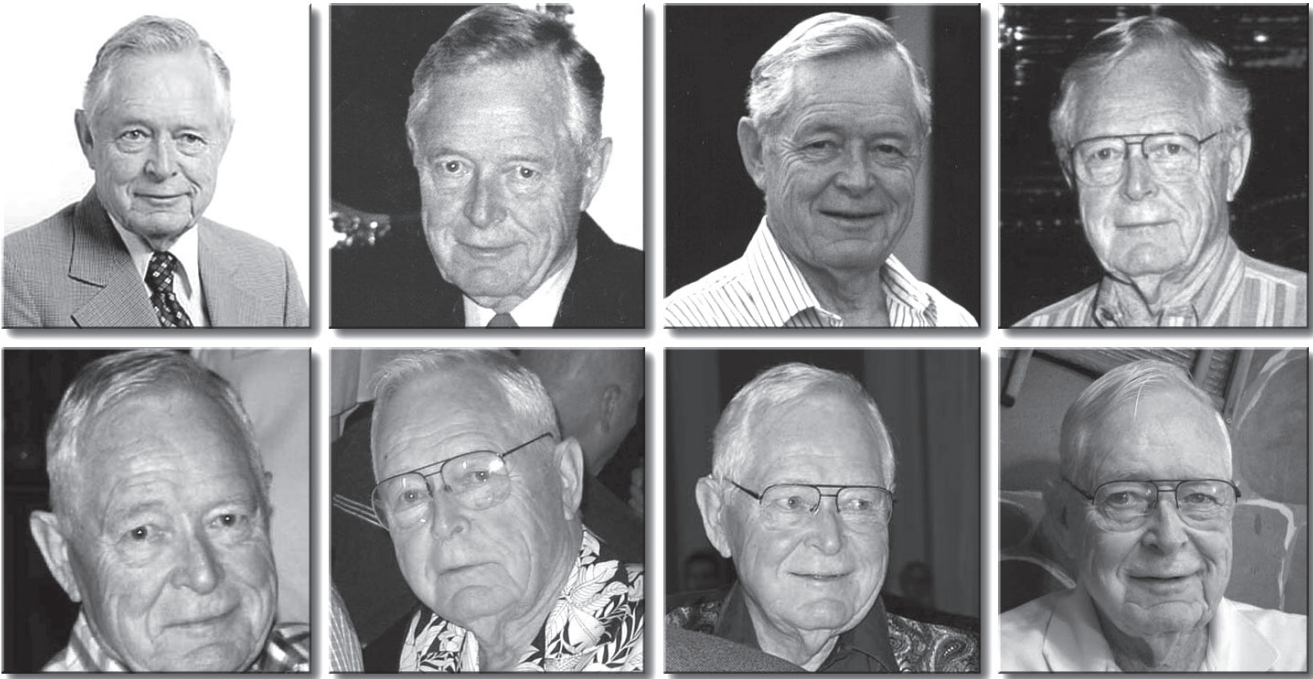
His advice to the organization, now that he can no longer fill the role of president at the national or the local chapter level, is for everyone to be an active participant. In particular, he declares, pay attention to who is elected president of the organization. He states that:

The president has the main role in setting the tone for the chapter. If he is happy, gregarious, compassionate, optimistic, then in all probability the chapter will be. If on the other hand, he is fault finding, gossipy, or negative, the entire chapter is in trouble. The president must always accentuate the positive, control the negative. Have fun, no matter what the task. The president must delegate, delegate, delegate: divide the work of the chapter into small tasks and hand them out to different persons so that no one (especially the president) feels overwhelmed.

Those words of advice are based on a long life of experience where they served Woody Baldwin well, and provided the qualities that caused Prime Timers to be able to grow from the initial seeds planted in 1987. Woody wrote a manual for chapters with guidelines on a variety of issues. His opening remarks are:

Congratulations. You are embarking on what may be the most challenging, rewarding, and interesting experience of your life. You are responsible for leading your chapter in meeting the Prime Timers' purpose of improving the lives of older gay and bisexual men, and those younger men who prefer the company of older men. You will be most effective if you keep your focus always on that goal. Such a focus will help to manage the "speed bumps" that are inevitable in any organization.





“It was one of the hardest things
I ever had to do.”



A Return to Texas

IN THE YEAR 1989, at 69 years of age, Baldwin moved from Reading to Austin and into another culture shock. The reason they were in the Boston area for seven years, after Professor Baldwin retired, was that Sean couldn't move away from his mother; even though she suffered from age-related dementia and didn't know where she was. Sean's mother originally lived in New Haven. He had spent one weekend of each month with her until she had a stroke and had to be housed in a nursing home. He was able to get her placed in a Boston suburb and spent a lot of time with her. Sean's father died before Woody met O'Neill and Sean was an only child and therefore the responsible one. Despite the progressing mental deterioration, she never failed to recognize Sean. His mother's attitude toward Woody was always friendly and cordial. In her day people didn't know as much about homosexuality as they do today. Whether she suspected the men were having a relationship is doubtful. She was a lovely lady and it was never mentioned. When she died Woody and Sean were able to consider moving away from the Boston area.

Woody states that they wanted to leave Boston because of the weather and the high taxes. It had nothing to do with getting away from Simmons or the old haunts. The men were free to live anywhere they wished. They spent numerous nights in the Reading reading room of the library studying the demographics of various cities. The more they read, the better Austin sounded. After the popcorn business closed, Sean worked doing deliveries for florists and he had a full two weeks vacation coming. Of course by now, Woody was fully retired except for his Prime Timers functions. They went to Austin and sampled as much as possible of the "culture" of the city in the two weeks. Both men loved it and that is how they retired there and never regretted the choice.

When their good friend Pat Colley of Chiron Rising magazine heard they were going to Austin for two weeks, he wrote four of his subscribers in Austin. All of them called and entertained the fellows one way or another, so they did know a few persons when they finally moved there in 1989 — a precursor of the benefits, support and friendliness provided by Prime Timers chapters in a strange city. Sean was only 60 at the time and Woody 69. Woody still considers it a wonderful city, even though Austin has almost doubled in population since he moved there in 1989.

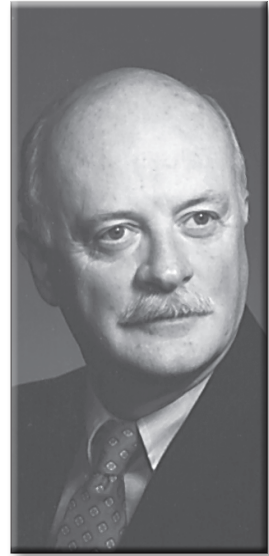
Sean O'Neill, born May 23, 1929, passed away on August 24, 2003, at age 74 of pulmonary fibrosis. He and Woody had lived in Austin for 14 years and had shared their lives together for more than 37 years. Woody had a strong support group to see him through the difficult loss. He also had strong support and friendship from the Prime Timers group he started, with that stated as a main purpose for the group's origination. Woody says the departure of Sean was the saddest time of his life, "Sean always had a smile for everybody and he is missed by a great many people."

Having been active in the Unitarian-Universalist church in Reading, the group there wanted to have a memorial service for Sean, so there were two services, one in Texas and one in Massachusetts. Baldwin went back to Reading to attend that service. The members of the church had previously given a beautiful going away party when Woody and Sean moved to Austin, and they outdid that performance at the memorial service. The choir in which Sean had sung did all the music for the service. "It was a lovely one and the church had a nice reception afterwards," but Woody says, "I was an emotional wreck by the time it was over."

In Woody's own words:

As many of you know, I recently lost my partner of 37 years. On both the optimism and getting back where you left off, I deserve an "F." I have learned that positive thoughts are much harder to conjure up when death of your loved one is the issue. And such a happening bears no resemblance to spilled milk. I can't imagine how I could have survived without the overwhelming support that I got from Prime Timers everywhere.

I don't have the vocabulary to describe how much this all meant to me. And the local chapter here in Austin has been so supportive in so many ways. Seven members were present when his last breath came and they stayed with me for the rest of the day. Another member spent three nights with me while Sean was in ICU; and one came from Boston to spend a week helping me get things in order.



In Sean's memory, Baldwin gave funds to the church as a memorial to Sean. Baldwin found it strange when Sean learned he was dying: he told Woody to direct that donations be made to the International Campaign for Tibet, instead of flowers being sent as condolences. Woody said he never knew Sean was so deeply into Buddhism until he died, and professed, "Oh, he had mentioned the Dalai Lama a few times. After he left, and I was going through his things, I learned that he had loads of literature on the subject. I don't know why he never discussed it with me, as when I read some of his literature it sounded like something I could relate to." Even after 37 years there was still new territory to be found within their long standing loving relationship.

Woody tried staying in his home by having roommates but after three disastrous attempts, each one worse than the previous, he sold the house and moved to a retirement home and he is very content there. He considers it a good move. Woody, 89 as of this writing, just finished a term as head of the resident council, a liaison committee between management and the residents; and evidence that he still is very active and involved in the life he is given. Woody still has an innate desire to feel necessary, and his lifestyle at the facility in Austin offers a lot of opportunities for that. He states, "This sounds insane I know, but I really enjoy living here."

Baldwin has always gotten along with all levels of society and never makes people feel uncomfortable because he has a doctorate and they might be barely high school graduates. He feels the status of a person is within themselves, not in their level of education or their job. Having come from a poor background himself, Woody does not feel superior to anyone in any way and is definitely not intimidating in his social interactions with others. He doesn't think of himself as famous, nor any better than anyone else. He soon became president of the Association at the retirement home. Who could have guessed?

As president of the Continental Retirement Home Association he began a newsletter as a way of quelling rumors about what was happening with staff, buildings, and members. He put interviews with the manager and staff in the publication, established a bulletin board, and succeeded in getting improvements to the landscaping. He changed the form of requesting changes from a "complaints" mentality to a "point of concern" attitude. The management liked his style and the way he brought staff and residents together and improved communication between the two groups. He lost the re-election recently by a fluke in the way a tie is decided. Many residents and the management were very disappointed. Because of his acute awareness of post-president syndrome, when he would be seen as constantly critical even if just making simple suggestions, he now weighs carefully his comments so that he doesn't sound like a part of the post-president syndrome, but he is still technically a member in good standing on the council.



The old folks homes of today are NOT filled with the newly enlightened younger generation. The generation in the retirement homes (between late seventies and ninety plus) is a generation that was never sympathetic to the gay lifestyle. One cannot expect that generation to suddenly change their minds, to uproot deep seated prejudices, simply because they are now in a retirement home. By the time today's younger people are ready for a retirement home, this discriminatory attitude may have largely died out, but that is not the current situation.

Because most people are heterosexual, most old folks' homes are exclusively or predominantly heterosexual; simply by default. To say there is no danger of other residents (or staff) being prejudiced is fantasy. Elderly gay people living in nursing homes or assisted-living centers or receiving home care, increasingly report that they have been disrespected, shunned or mistreated in ways that range from hurtful to deadly. Many have seen their partners and friends insulted, shunned or isolated. One certainly doesn't want to live in a hostile environment. Where many have been able to defy bias and so lead prosperous and rewarding lives, they wonder whether their old age will allow them to continue doing so, and even whether they will be denied adequate care if their orientation is known.

The reality is that the gay community in general is unprepared for aging; financially, emotionally, and culturally. The gay-only retirement as an option (if one would want that) is only in the beginning stages of development. Not all retirees want to isolate themselves in a homosexual-only environment but many see that as the only option until the society's opinions change. Who will lead the fight, as Baldwin did earlier, for recognition within the smaller community and eventually in wider society?

Consequently, Woody as so many still today, cannot be fully open about his personal life-style, nor does he ever expect to be. HE is very happy where he is and would not want to take a chance on being evicted. He is not naive enough to think that none of the people may suspect that he is "different," but there has never been a hint of it to him and that's the way he wants it to remain. At the retirement home Woody sees no reason why the other "in-mates" need to know anything about his sexual orientation. He is a private person who does not feel it necessary to broadcast his intimate life. Baldwin is not ashamed, nor unwilling, to do his part in securing respect for the older gay man and equal rights for all, but he prefers to show discretion as to personal information shared with casual acquaintances. He does not agree with the entirely negative connotation implied by the statement "in the closet" — that keeping one's privacy implies a lack of courage. (A stance arguable to zealous activists.) Certainly Woody's achievements belie the myth that one must be "out" to be effective in making change. He hates with a vengeance the term



“sexual preference.” He asks, “Who would chose to be gay?” Having to accommodate the prejudices of the society, within which he was born and raised, did not prevent him from making strong positive contributions to individuals and to society as a whole.

Baldwin was introduced to an audience a few years ago and the M.C. said, “I saw on TV the other night where the life expectancy for men is now 75. The way I have it figured is that Woody Baldwin has been dead for 8 years and no one has noticed.” Woody says, “Well, I’m still milking my longevity for all I can get out of it.” He tells another story about a recent visit to a comedy club with several of his younger (under seventy) friends. He convinced them to sit in the rear because at least one of the comedians would always pick on him due to his age. Sure enough, one of them picked him out and, after some prods and humorous traps, asked Woody, “Are you straight or gay? I mean, do you prefer a man or a woman?” Woody responded, “At my age it makes no difference. You take anything you can get!” And of course the audience loved him for it.

Baldwin complains one of his biggest problems with getting older is his inability to ask for favors. When Sean left, Woody went to a psychologist for quite a while to get help with his bereavement. The psychologist wanted him to call friends and ask for help. As one of the homework assignments between sessions, the doctor had Woody call someone and ask for their assistance. Baldwin says, “It was one of the hardest things I ever had to do.” He can’t drive at night now unless absolutely necessary and he misses a lot of Prime Timers socials because he won’t ask for a ride even from those who live near him. He wrote, “I am sure they would not consider me a nuisance. Oftentimes, they volunteer and I am most grateful.”

“My greatest challenge in life,” Woody asserts, “has been adjusting to the fact that I am not 40 anymore and never will be. At least when Sean was alive, I had a reason for existing. On my down days, I think I have outlived my usefulness to anyone, so why am I still here. I say to God, ‘Why me?’” He asserts he gets upset when people don’t call him but adds, “I have to face the fact that I don’t call anyone either. So what can I expect?”

Woody has a pragmatic attitude to aging and to his eventual death. He retains his characteristic sense of humor. Perhaps his own words express it best:

I am already preparing for getting old. Old age opens the door to a new world. The boy scout motto “Be Prepared” has always served us well. I’ll bore my friends with long discourses on my aches and pains. I’ll tell them the same stories over and over and over. I’ll be constantly saying things like “I remember when you could buy this for a nickel.” They’ll love it when I say, “I don’t know how I found time

to work.” I’ll have a plastic pill-box labeled S,M,T,W,T,F, and S. I’ll buy eight alarm clocks so I can remember to take all my medications when I’m supposed to.

Old age has to be wonderful because you have an excuse for everything. For example, if you forget something, if you embarrass your friends and family, if your clothes don’t match, well, you just shrug your shoulders and say, “I’m old,” and that’s all the excuse you’ll need. I’ll get senior discounts. I’ll exaggerate. I’ll be cantankerous. I’ll give up sex and do crossword puzzles instead or maybe even jigsaw puzzles. I’ll exercise. I’ll go to church and pray for the younger generation that’s going to hell in a hand basket (whatever that is).

I’ll eat chocolate and not feel guilty. I’ll be old and I’ll deserve it. I’ll complain. I’ll say what I really think. I’ll wear purple. I’ll look in the mirror every day and marvel at how that old man can look so young. I’ll be the most contentious bridge player at the senior center. And heaven help you, partner, if you trump my ace! I don’t think you can start too soon at planning for old age. So I’m planning!

Woody also prepares for old age by doing meditation regularly, using a tape from a course he took in mind-body meditation and yoga. It has no religious significance and is for relaxation and energy balance. He does Tai Chi, Tuesdays and Thursdays and stretching exercises on Mondays and Wednesdays, including a 30 minute walk every day, and even in bad weather walks the halls for 30 minutes. When he’s feeling particularly energetic he adds some time on the exercise bikes, but lately he has had to cut back a bit because his knees are mush. Woody says, “the older I get, the worse the lack of energy is. I need to make the effort but I don’t. I don’t like me for it. I just don’t make an effort to find the energy.” He does play bridge regularly at the retirement home.

Living in the same retirement home are three fellows who all attended Amarillo High School. Woody says, “It is really quite exciting that Bob Tilmson and I are under the same roof after our 70th High School Graduation.” Although the men didn’t know each other at the time, they are having fun comparing experiences from those days. Woody added, “If we had only known in 1938 that we would someday be living in the same home, we might have built a stronger bond in high school. But how often do we all think, consciously or unconsciously, ‘If I had known then!’” as they say in Texas, where the three old boys are, “you betcha.” He says all the old people at Continental are an inspiration.

Woody still enjoys theater although that has been curtailed by a significant loss of hearing. The deafness, in his terms, “is a burden.” He is completely deaf in the right ear and wears a hearing aid in the left. The aid is very limited and

in public places where there is regular background noise, conversation is impossible. He travels as his limitations permit, playing bridge and participating in the Austin Prime Timers activities.” Woody quotes from Plato: “He who is of a calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of aging; but to him who is of an opposite disposition; youth and age are equally a burden.” He adds his own wisdom:

Old age is a horrible experience only if you choose it to be. You are in control. If you isolate yourself, cease your activities, pursue no interests, you will surely get old and hate it. What you get out of something is in direct proportion to what you put into it.

“Prime Timers is spoiling me,” said Woody in 2009 in regards to the Austin chapter of the organization. “In deference to my age, they disregarded rules on who gets to sit where (based on a ticket lottery pick) for the weekly dominos games. In my case, because the dining room chairs are more comfortable, they wouldn’t let my random pick remain valid!” Despite his contention that old age sucks, Woody guesses there are some advantages; although he is not comfortable with privileges granted just because he is old.

Woody has instructions with his executor to ask people to donate to their favorite non-discriminating charity. He says, “I know that sounds like hypocrisy, when I am the founder of an organization that discriminates against women, but so be it. I have never aimed for perfection.” In deference to that remark, the author of this sketch would argue that Woody has achieved perfection in living a life which has brought meaningful benefit, happiness and joy to others; in his early school days, later as a “best loved” professor, as a “popcorn advisor” in his retirement, and as the founder of Prime Timers, one of the world’s largest social organizations exclusively geared to the needs of gay and bisexual men.

Woody Baldwin’s efforts to organize Prime Timers effectively changed the established position of society from within. Baldwin was never one to exit the existing social structure and fight the activist fight from outside the establishment. Woody realized the way to change perceptions was not to be confrontational, but rather to plant the seed in people’s minds that perhaps there was another side to the issue; a perceptual lesson taught by his sociology professor in his early years. Professor Emeritus, Woodrow W. Baldwin, in assessing his environment, determined the best course for him to take to be effective in making positive change was to remain a private person in regards to his personal life. Baldwin was a true proponent of the ripple effect, of casting a small effort to have broader effects. He didn’t attempt to change the entire perception of the community at once, but bit by bit he did, and he was eminently successful in his work, academic career, retirement, and social activism.

Baldwin says he decided recently to take an inventory of himself — to call a meeting with himself — to find out how much of his thinking is negative as opposed to positive. Baldwin sat at the desk and took two sheets of paper and spent the next couple of hours writing down thoughts. The one's that are positive on one sheet, and those that are somehow related to hate on the other. Operating on the theory that you have to know yourself before you can relate to others; Woody says, "I have embarked on a program to reduce that negative list." He also says, "Prepare for shock when you see your own lists." One of his prominent items on the negative list is that he doesn't like the fact that he is not intellectually curious and limits his interests to those things that directly affect him. Woody is not a negative person but does remind me during the interviews that he has faults too, and wants them noted in the sketch.



The internet is now a vital component of his life. He can't watch TV due to the deafness, and has particular trouble with female voices due to the pitch. The phone is also difficult. Woody is too proud to carry a cane, as evidenced by a recent trip to Boston, where he threw the cane in the trunk of the car after getting off the plane and said he'd grab it for the return flight. He is still a spry and handsome man, although his knees give him trouble, he has neuropathy in his feet, and a massive amount of pills (13 at last count) to take each day.

Woodrow Wilson Baldwin asks himself the question:

Am I going to heaven or hell? I don't know. I don't go to church. I do sin of the flesh as defined by some denominations. But I live right (at least by my standards — but even those standards may be disputable by some people). I guess I am still looking for some scientific proof that heaven and hell exist. Am I violating my preaching that we should be tolerant of all our fellowmen when I maneuver to avoid playing bridge with certain players at the senior center?

When I was a kid my new sister-in-law taught me two definitions of love. (Why do I remember these when I can't remember where I had lunch?) Whatever. "Love is an itching of the heart that can't be scratched" and "Love is a feeling that you feel when you feel like you're going to have a feeling that you never felt before." There are so many kinds of love. The love I feel for one person is so different from the love I feel for another, or for Austin, or chocolate, sex, bridge, autumn, life, etc. And the list goes on.

According to the gospel by Woody, and the solution to life's difficulties and negative seeming events: "Love is the Answer."

And thus went the first 90 years.





“Who is going to read it? Maybe the title should be
‘More Than You Ever Wanted to Know about Woody Baldwin’ ”



Author's Afterword

ABOUT THE BIOGRPHICAL SKETCH

EXTRAORDINARY was to be the first word of this biographical sketch; about an ordinary man who made something extra of his life, and took that extra effort to have a positive influence on the lives of others. But where was I to begin? That inability to come up with that first sentence! Those crumpled papers in the trash and of course, the nagging effect of avoiding the task at hand entirely.

For myself, as author, this project began with a casual comment by a friend; that Woody Baldwin, only a casual acquaintance of mine at the time, was having his 89th birthday. The comment prompted a birthday card from me and not much else. Where the idea arose to make a 90th birthday biographical birthday tribute I haven't the faintest clue; except that I had recently retired and needed a project. This event afforded the opportunity to do something to acknowledge Woody Baldwin's extraordinary life. Heck, anybody who can make it through the first 90 years deserves the attention.

I wasn't sure the project would ever get off the ground. How many people want a stranger poking about in their professional and personal life and pestering them with seemingly irrelevant questions? Would Mr. Baldwin give permission to do this? Of course I couldn't make this a surprise. What was a surprise was his acquiescence to the project and his subsequent very active participation in the process of gathering information amid months of

nearly daily Email correspondence. Woody remained throughout the entire process, humble, flattered, grateful and amazed that anybody would think of his life as extraordinary. He states that he still sees himself as “an ordinary, everyday, run-of-the-mill, average, generic guy like the millions of others roaming this great world of ours.”

In 2008 Woody was cleaning out some old files with a lot of pictures, clippings, letters, programs, etc. and he saved those into a collection called “Woody’s ego.” He also took a picture album, “inserted some of the stuff” and added personal family background material and called it the “Who the Hell is Woody Baldwin?” album. These earlier efforts made it easier for him to find archival materials to send me in 2009. Baldwin indicated the bigger problem was finding the energy; a product he purports to have a minimum of at age 89. What Woody amassed in the scrapbooks was a great start. Research assistants at Simmons College kept me supplied with further information, as well as research help from UCLA. Some of Professor Baldwin’s long-time friends made early contributions to the project.

Woody remarked early in the process, “It has been fun actually to talk about myself; which I am not comfortable doing in other instances. You [the author of this sketch] now probably know more about me than my friends of 50 years.” Woody insisted his remarks be translated from the first to third person — did not want the sketch to be written in the first person. “That would make it all sound very pretentious,” he said, “and it is difficult enough for me to talk about myself.” Woody could not imagine anyone else thinking his biography interesting enough to merit the work involved and kept thinking, “Who is going to read it?” He commented, “Maybe the title should be *More Than You Ever Wanted to Know about Woody Baldwin.*” Well, certainly not the title, but it might make for a fun subtitle!

My personal friend and life-long partner, Gene Gates, insisted I make a trip to Austin to interview Woody, as Woody and I had met only for a few minutes at a dinner party in our house in Reno in 2007; two years prior to the start of this project. A great deal had been accomplished in the two months of daily Emails between Woody and I, but there was still missing the personal interaction. Woody had also showed understandable reluctance to send the scrapbooks and the only way to get access to the photos for scanning was to make the trip to Austin.

I arrived in Austin on Saturday July, 11, 2009, to extremely hot, record-breaking, temperatures and in the midst of a 30 year drought. Woody did not seem intimidated about my arrival, or he at least disguised it well, yet I was very nervous. I had no idea how to proceed. My lists of specific questions, leftovers from our two months of constant Email correspondence, were all I had

for starters. In hindsight I would have had less trouble in the post-interview writing and sorting through my notes had I been better prepared with a structure for keeping my notes.

One of the reasons for the loose approach was to avoid making Woody nervous about the examination. I felt a conversational and simple friendly meeting format, without too much overt note-taking, would be best. I had considered running a tape recorder but did not for that same reason. And last but not least, I needed a break from the project before the interviews. I'd been working full time on the sketch and the Web site for two months and the only break possible was to ignore any pre-interview preparation for a couple of days.

On Saturday, the day of my arrival, we spent most of the day on scanning old photos, certificates, awards, publications, and so forth, with a laptop and a portable scanner. Much of this material prompted additional storied segments for the sketch. There was much that was new information. As an example: I had been totally unaware that Woody had published a dining guide in Boston for six years.

The second day of interviews, after an evening at the hotel organizing the previous days notes, was taken up with more scanning and with the clarification of details on the new material. By the middle of the afternoon we had finished all the scanning and retired to his sitting room for more conversation. We would stall occasionally in the process of discovering his life, but found that by changing to a different segment we could find renewed conversation. He continued to question why anybody would be so interested in his simple life, but also commented that by working with me on this project he learned a lot about himself. He found connections from his past which had determined his future course and that he had not noticed them before.

By Monday, the third day, we were both now fairly well acquainted and any nervousness about the process was gone. Over the course of the past days I had interjected stories from my own life as a way of drawing out similar ones from his, and also as a "quid pro quo." Still, I was acutely aware that I didn't know Woody Baldwin. Persistence in asking more deeply personal questions (boxers or briefs?) added a few facts but didn't provide the awareness of a person that a long friendship would. Permission to interview his longest known friend in Boston gave me some hope for insight, and an interview with a long time colleague from Simmons gave me more avenues for knowing Professor Baldwin. I realized that, although I might know more about him now than anybody else, only time spent with somebody reveals who they are. A discouraging thought for this biographer's attempt to share the story.

Tuesday, July 14th, was the last chance on this visit to expand on the interview. Only a half day in Austin as the flight out was early afternoon.

Our conversation covered various segments somewhat sporadically and it was evident we were both tired of the game. I felt a sadness at the impending completion of our project, the loss of a daily communication and a developing friendship.

A sense of accomplishment comes to me as I write these last words but I will miss the regular interaction with Woody. I made sure he understood that he had final say on the content of the sketch — nothing would be published without his permission.

At the airport's departure curb, Woody and I had a pre-flight hug. He said, "I think I have found another friend." His words took a while to sink in. Woody is known by a lot of people and has a lot of acquaintances, but he numbers his friends as few. Only later did I understand the blessing I was being granted; to be called Dr. Woodrow Wilson Baldwin's friend. Dr. Woodrow Wilson Baldwin — Une vie Extraordinaire.

Lawrence Peterson
Reno, Nevada
September, 2009



END NOTES

THE FOLLOWING NOTES present some interesting research and comments which were included in the original draft but cut for the sake of readability. It is included here as additional material, but the author did not see a need to confuse the narrative by referencing it via footnoted annotations in the text.

Population maps from the time show immigrants with the name Baldwin began to show up in Texas in the early 1900s — there being virtually none in 1845 when Texas joined the United States as the 28th state. In the 1880s there were fewer than 500 Baldwins registered and in 1920, when Woodrow Wilson Baldwin was born, there were still fewer than 700 registered with the US Census Bureau. The majority of the Baldwins who came to the United States came from northern England. The name Baldwin is of English origin, from the Old English Bealdwine, or the Old German equivalent Baldavin, meaning “bold friend”. It was frequently used in medieval Britain as a surname, and was extremely popular among the Normans and in Flanders in the early Middle Ages. Baldwin is also common in Scotland so there is a possibility of Scottish ancestry in the name. But, most immigration “Port of departures” lists show a departure from London and Liverpool, making it difficult to determine exact origin without extensive genealogical research.

The Motto (Translated) on the Baldwin Family crest is “I will never forget.” Perhaps, as Woody says in a recent Email, “I will never forget” might have applied to me at one time, but it surely doesn’t now. ‘I forgot’ is now the most used phrase in my vocabulary.”

President Woodrow Wilson, who promoted labor union growth, supervised agriculture and food production through the Lever Act, took over control of the railroads, and suppressed anti-war movements and it was under his presidency that national women's suffrage was achieved. Largely for his efforts in 1919 to create the League of Nations and to shape the Treaty of Versailles, President Wilson's was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1919.

Born in 1920: Last but not least the era witnessed the opening, in Emeryville, California, of the first dog racing track to employ a mechanical rabbit!

"Liberty" was a general-interest weekly magazine, originally priced at five cents and subtitled, "A Weekly for Everybody." At one time it was said to be "the second greatest magazine in America," ranking behind "The Saturday Evening Post" in circulation. The magazine "Physical Culture," about health, fitness, and physical development, started in March of 1899. It was a true pioneer, and probably the most successful. It provided serious information, fads, fiction, attractive models in scanty sporting costumes, and pages of advertising aimed at the active and those who wished they were. "Physical Culture" gained both newsstand sales and public condemnations for its slightly "racy" covers with dancers and swimmers and other attractive male and female models. In 1909 its obscenity conviction was appealed to the Supreme Court, which found in the magazines favor. Had to help sales, eh? "True Story" easily matched the sales of traditional big-sellers such as Ladies Home Journal and the Saturday Evening Post. "True Story" (along with siblings "True Romance" and "True Experience") would maintain a large and devoted readership right into the 1990s.

The "Dust Bowl" or the "Dirty Thirties" occurred during a period from 1930 to 1936 (and in some areas until 1940). These immense dust storms — given names such as "Black Blizzards" and "Black Rollers" — often reduced visibility to a few feet. The Dust Bowl affected over 100,000,000 acres and was centered on the panhandle of Texas and Oklahoma. More than 500,000 Americans were left homeless. The Dust Bowl exodus was the largest migration in American history within a short period of time. By 1940, 2.5 million people had moved out of the Plains states. Why the Baldwins did not leave remains a mystery of the past.

Farmers suffered terribly where many crops were devastated by the droughts. The skies darkened and turned day into night. In 1932 there were 14 dust storms; in 1933, thirty-eight; in 1934, twenty-two; in 1935, forty; in

1936, sixty-eight; in 1937, seventy-two; in 1938, sixty-one; in 1939, thirty; in 1940, seventeen; in 1941, seventeen. It was reported that in 1935 these terrible storms lasted more than 908 hours! Seven times during that year, the visibility was virtually zero. One notable blackout lasted no less than eleven hours straight, and in another instance a single storm lasted for 3 and 1/2 days! In '35 these "Black Blizzards" appeared with dust reaching as high as 8,000 feet. This was very damaging to the soil and caused immense economic loss.

Many families suffered terribly during these times, some to the point of near starvation. Many who came down sick during these horrific storms developed later illnesses, some suffering permanent eye and lung damage, while others suffered sickness brought on by damage to their lungs and other respiratory diseases due to the severity of storms during the Dust Bowl. Many elderly, as well as small children and babies, died as a result of dust sicknesses.

In 1999, sixty-one years after graduation, Woodrow Wilson Baldwin is still Class President for the Class year of 1938 at their Amarillo High School reunions.

In preparation for the invasion of Africa, Patton trained his troops in exercises begun in late 1941, and continued them well into the summer of 1942. Patton chose a 10,000-acre expanse of unforgiving desert known for its blistering temperatures, sandy arroyos and absolute desolation — a close match for the terrain Patton and his men would encounter during the campaigns in North Africa — an area about 50 miles southeast of Palm Springs, as well as an area in Virginia known by Woody's regiment as AP hell.

During that time [WW II] the United States Government took over a number of floors of the Hudson Hotel building. On several floors Army troops were quartered, waiting for transport to Europe. On other floors civilian employees from out of town, slated to go to England for the Office of War Information, were temporarily housed while being trained for overseas duty.

Although he never saw the Musselman's again, they kept in touch by mail (mostly Christmas cards) until Professor Musselman died, many years ago.

We have not found, as of this writing, a copy of anything published by Professor Woodrow Baldwin while at UCLA. During a period of "downsizing" to move into retirement (he had a box labeled "Woody's Ego") he threw

away almost all the plaques, gavels, awards, letters of commendation, etc. — never anticipating having a use for them. He said he very seldom went through them anyhow, so they went into the trash with a lot of the “unnecessary” stuff he didn’t have room for in his much smaller apartment. While the author was investigating finding copies through UCLA archives Woody wrote, “I didn’t know then I would ever meet anybody who would have an interest in all that stuff.”

In researching files at UCLA this author did not find anything significant in the student report files. All the student reports about Professors are anonymous and intended solely to give suggestions about how to improve the courses. To his knowledge, Professor Baldwin never had a negative one. The reports were never made public; they were strictly between professor and students. The department did not require them. Microfilm from the student newspapers didn’t show any significant mentions of Professor Baldwin, although the reviewing was cursory as the publication is weekly, covers ten years of time to research, and the contents are not indexed in any way.

Woody did have three buddies at UCLA he was closest to. Professor Baldwin stood as best man at the wedding of his friend Henry, who was on faculty as a teaching assistant and who later became a high school teacher and principal. Of the other two, Larry was Baldwin’s office mate and the third, Bud, worked for a textbook company.

Professor Baldwin took sabbatical leaves first half of 1963-1964 and the second half of 1970-1971 and the second semester 1977-1978 Both of the early sabbaticals were spent touring Europe. During the second of those Baldwin visited American businesses in each country to learn the differences of doing business in that specific country. After returning home he gave a few speeches to service clubs and business groups on the subject although he never published his findings.

The evolution of campus unrest, from expressing skepticism to the more violent burning of buildings and throwing rocks (or bombs) at law enforcement officials can be seen in students’ protests in the 1960s’ Berkeley (1964-66), Columbia (1968), Kent State (1970) and Jackson State (1970). By 1970 more than three quarters of American college students thought that basic changes in the system were necessary and that confrontations ranging from non-violent demonstrations to violent acts were necessary to achieve those

changes. The largest student strike in American history took place in May and June 1970, in response to the Kent State shootings and the American invasion of Cambodia. The era witnessed the assassinations of President John Kennedy and of the activist/preacher Martin Luther King. The Viet Nam Protests, (in which this author participated in Boston at that time) were more often than not supported by the more socially aware Universities in New England.

Boston apartments: His first one had been the ballroom in one of the mansions. It was a huge, beautiful room with Ionic columns every eight feet (as best he remembers) and it had French doors that opened out onto a fire escape. The room had a beautiful view of the Charles River that separates Boston and Cambridge. There was a kitchen in one corner and a bathroom in the opposite corner.

The warehouse apartment story: So he wandered over to the old stone warehouse, met a couple who obviously lived there and asked if there were any apartments available. They told him there was a waiting list of over 200 people waiting but they gave him the name of the man he had to see to get on the list. The next day Professor Baldwin went to see him and he verified the fact that there were over 200 names but he took the Baldwin name and phone number. Soon after that Woody went to Europe for the summer and when he came back called out of curiosity to see if his name had advanced any, Woody wanted one of those apartments so badly. The man told him he had tried to call during the time he was away as there had been a vacancy, but he told Woody he could have the next one. He said he had no idea when that might be. Sure enough, it was only 2 or 3 months until he got an apartment on Commercial Wharf. It was one room, 53 feet by 20 feet. They had built in a kitchen about 8 x 8, and an 8 x 8 bathroom that had been the freight elevator when it was a warehouse.

Sean moves to Boston: Woody said, "One of my partnered friends told me that I should have to get an apartment with a pouting room, thus a private bedroom. So we took a one bedroom apartment, only a short walk from the beach, until I bought my house."

The Prime Timers Worldwide Bi-annual Convention was held in Reno, Nevada, in October of 2007. This was in celebration of the twentieth year since the founding of the organization in 1987. In 2007, Gene Gates was Secretary of the High Sierra Prime Timers and we were a very small group by most

chapter's standards. There was some doubt within our own chapter about our ability to manage a successful convention, but we did it! More than 400 attended and the Reno chapter received many "Bravos".

Woody was called upon to say a few words at the Saturday night banquet. He needed no prodding and made a brief extemporaneous speech thanking everyone for being there. He also thanked the Reno chapter for putting together an excellent convention. There were tears in his eyes as he expressed his gratitude to all of us for having accepted his idea of a social organization for elderly gay and bi-sexual men and their admirers.

The Board of Directors met at the Gates/Peterson house on the Monday following the close of the convention because the hotel did not have a suitable room available. It will forever remain a thrill to Lawrence [the author of this sketch] and Gene that Woody Baldwin was in their house! It was this first meeting with Woody that led to the work on this project.

A COMMENT FROM WOODY

A great job and well handled. It has been fun to actually talk about myself; which I am not comfortable doing in other instances. The reader of this sketch will now probably know more about me than my friends of many years, and the writing makes for interesting reading, even for me. A beautiful description of my boyhood. Nice going! I'm enjoying and appreciating your work more with each segment's reading. The connections from my past, which determined my life's future course, and which I had not noticed before, makes for intriguing reading. I am so lucky (again) to have as my biographer a true wordsmith.

I can't thank the author and editors enough for the time and effort put into this project; I am so grateful. The presentation of my life's tale certainly has taken out some of the sting associated with the rolling over of that first digit in our age, and has me almost looking forward to being 90. Even if I "don my wings and halo" before March 28, 2010, at least I will know that my 90th will be honored.

A couple of members of the Dallas chapter have hounded me for years to write my autobiography. Not only was I too lazy to undertake such a project, especially at this stage of my life, but I've never felt my life merited such an effort. The author and editors certainly deserve a trophy for dedication, hard work, and most important (to me) the ability to make an old man feel good. I can't imagine a birthday present more meaningful than what they've created. When the author uses the phrase "our hero" I have an initial feeling that he is off the subject and is talking about someone I don't know. I hope for the author and editors that something will happen in their lives that will be as pleasurable and flattering as what they have done for me.

Forever grateful,
Woody Baldwin
Austin, Texas

References and additional information available at:
<http://www.woodybaldwin.com>
