

## H. Allen and Mary K. Chapman

Donne Pitman shares the story  
of the Chapman legacy.

### Chapter 1 - 0:54

#### Introduction

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**Announcer:** H. Allen Chapman was the son of Tulsa philanthropist James A. and Leta Chapman. He and Mary Katherine Lancaster were married in 1960. She had graduated from the University of Tulsa and worked as a nurse before her marriage to H. Allen Chapman, who owned Chapman Exploration, Incorporated, and independent oil and gas production firm. The couple purchased a controlling interest in the National Bank of Commerce in 1968, which eventually became the Bank of Oklahoma. H.A. and Mary K. Chapman were often anonymous donors. However they were both publicly recognized by numerous charitable and educational groups. Listen now to our storyteller, Donne Pitman, who became a close confidant of H. Allen Chapman. Donne is a trustee of the H. A. and Mary K. Chapman Charitable Trust, which is a Founding Sponsor of VoicesofOklahoma.com.

### Chapter 2 - 4:33

#### Meeting the Chapmans

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**John Erling:** Today is June 30th, 2009. This is John Erling with Donne Pitman. Donne, you are the witness to the history of the Chapmans.

**Donne Pitman:** I am.

**JE:** Tell me first about yourself. When were you born?

**DP:** November 1, 1940.

**JE:** Where were you born?

**DP:** I was born in a house, not a hospital in Hanson, Oklahoma, which is a small rural community just outside of Sallisaw.

**JE:** Did you grow up there in that community?

**DP:** I did not. I moved away at an early age, but still have many family members there. My father was in WWII. After the war we moved to northern California to a town by the name of Marysville, then to Wichita, Kansas, then to the Tulsa area. My father was an educator and came here as a principal for Catoosa Schools.

**JE:** Do you have brothers and sisters?

**DP:** I'm an only child.

**JE:** Where did you go to elementary school?

**DP:** I started in California through the second grade and then moved to Wichita and finished fifth grade there and then moved to the Tulsa area and from fifth grade on I went to Catoosa schools. I graduated from Catoosa High School and then I went on up to NEO A&M Junior College in Miami, Oklahoma. I had two years there and then went to the University of Colorado. I did some graduate studies at the University of Tulsa.

**JE:** What was your degree in?

**DP:** I have a degree in education. Because my parents were both in education, I thought that's what I would probably do and I liked it. In fact, I did practice teaching and I really liked that. But I had worked a summer for the Chapman Oil Company, Chapman Exploration as a part-time job while I was in school. They offered me a position to come back after graduation and put me through a training program. As I recall, the salary was \$50/month more than I was offered in Boulder, Colorado where I really wanted to stay-I loved it up there. My father encouraged me to come back and try this Chapman organization. You know he said, "If you don't like it, you can always go back to the mountains."

**JE:** How did you even get the internship?

**DP:** I got it through football. When I left NEO and was at Colorado University, I wanted a summer job in Tulsa. The gentleman that ran the Chapman business at that time, his name was George Carlson. George had been a football player and a boxer at the University of Colorado and he was still very involved in the athletic program. He was also a Rhodes Scholar and came back and taught at the law school before he came to Tulsa. The coach contacted Mr. Carlson and that's how I got in with the Chapmans.

**JE:** He just asked you if you wanted a job?

**DP:** That's right.

**JE:** Sports paid off for you in a big way, didn't they?

**DP:** They paid off in a very big way. In fact, when I was recruited to Colorado Mr. Carlson was contacted by the Colorado coaching staff. Even before I got this job. I remember he took me to Sunday Brunch at Southern Hills one time and I had never heard of that place but I was very impressed with it. But he was trying to help get me to go to Colorado.

**JE:** So then that is your first association with the Chapmans?

**DP:** That summer, when I was working for the Chapman organization. I was just a gopher. They had just finished a lodge in northern Colorado and needed some boats and vehicles and household furnishings and the like up there. One of my jobs was to drive a Jeep up there and pull a boat and load it with stuff and take it to that lodge. When I would get up there, I would usually stay an extra day. I made two or three trips that summer from Tulsa, which wasn't a very pleasant job but I got to meet the Chapmans, H. A. and Mark Chapman. He loved to trout fish. While I was there he would ask me to accompany him on these trout fishing expeditions into the mountains. I really enjoyed that. I had always fished with my father. He and I became friends. I would take care of all the details, you know, making sure all of the equipment was there and periodically we would spend a night in the mountains and pitch a tent. That was my job to take care of all of that, but it was fun for me. I was 20 years old at the time, so I loved every minute of it and I was getting paid for it.

**JE:** There had to also be something about your personality and his that worked—that matched.

**DP:** They did. We were very different people. I would say we had opposite personalities. He was very introverted and I am more extroverted. He didn't talk much and I love to talk and have fun.

**JE:** Sometimes people who are introverted don't like to be around people who talk a lot, but he apparently enjoyed that.

**DP:** Well, something about me he seemed to enjoy.

**JE:** Yes.

**DP:** Because we became over the years very close friends and I consider myself one of his confidantes because we talked about things that never got outside of the room.

**JE:** You are talking about Harry Allen Chapman.

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** And I want to get back to him.

## Chapter 3 - 3:02

### James Chapman

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**John Erling:** But let's jump back to his father.

**Donne Pitman:** James A. Chapman.

**JE:** Right. What kind of a person was James Chapman?

**DP:** Well, I didn't know him well, but I did meet him on a few occasions. He was very quiet and very much a gentleman. He always had a suit except when he went to his ranch and

usually a vest. He was very inconspicuous. If you were to see Jim Chapman walking down the street, or his son, you would never know that they were of vast wealth. The way that I met him the first time was in the first year that I was working for his son. His confidante and attorney was a front man named John Rogers. John Rogers was an attorney. In fact, I think he was instrumental in starting the University of Tulsa law school. He was the first Dean. But I get a call one afternoon as I'm in my office for H.A. Chapman from Mr. Rogers. Mr. Rogers also was a quiet man and very gentlemanly. He asked if I had time the next afternoon at 2:30pm, if I could come over to the James Chapman offices because Mr. Chapman wanted to visit with me. I told him that I would be happy to do that. So I hung up and immediately called my employer, James Chapman's son, H.A. Chapman. I told him that I talked to Mr. Rogers whom he knew well and that Mr. Rogers wanted me to come over tomorrow at 2:30pm and see his father. I said, "Mr. Chapman, your dad and I have never met. He knows nothing about me. I can't imagine what he wants to visit with me about because I have nothing to do with his business and you and he do not have any joint ventures." Mr. Chapman smiled and he said, "Donne, if dad wants to see you tomorrow, he probably knows more about you than your mother knows." (Laughter) Well, that frightened me just a little because, you know, I got to thinking about what have I done now? (Laughter) But, I went over to Mr. Chapman's office and he came from behind his desk and we sat out in two chairs in front of the desk and we just visited in general. When I left I was very comfortable and I could see that he was just wondering where I came from, what my father and mother did, where they were educated, if I had brothers and sisters, just general information about me. He was interested in knowing who was going to be working with his son.

**JE:** Was that as you were getting connected with H.A. Chapman?

**DP:** I had been there six or eight months.

**JE:** He just wanted to know.

**DP:** He just wanted to know. But it was a very casual friendly, low-key meeting.

**JE:** You were given his blessing.

**DP:** Apparently.

**JE:** If he didn't care for you, he might have told his son, "This is not the guy."

**DP:** Yes, that's correct.

**JE:** So unbeknownst to you, you were passing a bigger test than you knew.

**DP:** That's right. Basically that was because of my age.

**JE:** How old would you have been?

**DP:** I would have been 22 or so. I was just out of college.

**JE:** That was one meeting with Mr. Chapman. Did you meet him again?

**DP:** Yes. I was over at their office visiting with Mr. Rogers and would see him and just give him a cordial “Hello” and he would say, “How are you Donne?” and they were very at ease, simple meetings but they weren’t scheduled.

## Chapter 4 - 1:46

### Allen Chapman’s Death

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**John Erling:** To H. Allen Chapman, the man that you worked for, the son of James Chapman, how is he named? His name is Happy Allen Chapman, but he went my H. Allen Chapman or H.A. Chapman?

**Donne Pitman:** His close friends called him Allen. I we had a call at the office and someone was wanting to make an appointment with Harry Allen, we knew they didn’t know him. He took very few appointments.

**JE:** He was born in 1919 in Colorado and he died in 1979.

**DP:** That’s correct.

**JE:** He would have then been 60 years old.

**DP:** He was 59 when he died.

**JE:** That’s an early age to die. What were the circumstances of his death?

**DP:** He had a circulatory problem and he had heart problems. His body just wore out. He lived a full life and his body wore out early.

**JE:** So he had something to do with his own demise?

**DP:** I think so.

**JE:** And you had to keep up with this man?

**DP:** Yes, I did. But at the time I went to work for him he was probably in his early 40s. He had slowed down a lot. His lifestyle was really rather simple at that time. He loved yachting. He had a yacht and he loved that. He spent a lot of time on that boat. He loved going to Europe. The last few years of his life he was based out of Monte Carlo in the summer. That made my life somewhat simple because I am back and forth a lot. He loved automobile racing as a young man. He would fly to different places in the world racing sports cars. He had a car in the 500 and he hit that circuit. It was called the Chapman Special. He really enjoyed that and I went to the race with him numerous times.

**JE:** He lived most of his life here in Tulsa though, didn’t he?

**DP:** He did.

**JE:** Do you recall the schools that he went to?

**DP:** I don't know where he attended elementary. I know he went to Cascia Hall. I don't think he went to college.

## Chapter 5 - 4:56

### Pitman Learns Business

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**John Erling:** He was a businessman?

**Donne Pitman:** Yes.

**JE:** He started the Chapman Exploration Company?

**DP:** He did.

**JE:** Which was an independent oil and gas company?

**DP:** That's correct.

**JE:** Talk to us about that. He had already started that by the time you came along.

**DP:** No, when I went to work for him the business was all in his name, just H.A. Chapman. We incorporated into Chapman Exploration from a liability standpoint because there are a lot of liabilities in oil and gas operations. This would have been in the mid to late 1960s. That company continued until we sold out in 1989. He passed away in 1979, but Mrs. Chapman wanted to continue the oil business and we kept Chapman Exploration as the operating entity.

**JE:** Let's come back to you again. Your job at first was as a gopher.

**DP:** That's right.

**JE:** And your degree was in education.

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** How do you get into the dollars and the dollar signs of this business? How does that happen?

**DP:** That was very difficult for me. I had never been around great wealth. Actually my first job with them they sent me to Great Bend, Kansas where we had three drilling rigs and an engineering and geological office for our production in Kansas. I left Colorado and came to Tulsa on August 1st and went to work full-time in 1963. The first place they sent me the following week was Great Bend, Kansas. I'm from Boulder and I had been up there a few years and it was nice and cool and beautiful. Great Bend, Kansas was flat and hot and windy and dirty. (Laughter) I really didn't like my job very well.

**JE:** What was your job then?

- DP:** Well, I was out on the rigs. I was working with the roustabouts on the production that we had. I was just trying to learn the business from the ground roots up.
- JE:** So you knew there was a greater mission involved other than just pushing tools around at the moment, which seemed not very interesting. Is that true? Or could you see beyond what you were doing at that moment?
- DP:** At that point I couldn't see beyond what I was doing. I was wondering what am I going to be doing five years from now? But after several months in the field, I was sent back to Tulsa and put in the accounting department. I may have disliked working in the accounting department more than I disliked working in the field because I just didn't like sitting behind a desk and looking at figures all day long. But Mr. Chapman wanted me to be exposed to all aspects of the business.
- JE:** Did he tell you that when you went to Kansas? That he wanted you to get involved in everything?
- DP:** No.
- JE:** It was then when you were brought in to Tulsa and disliked your work in accounting that he probably said to you that he wanted you to be more exposed to the business?
- DP:** He did at that time.
- JE:** So then you said, a-ha, now I am getting the picture?
- DP:** No, I really didn't get it at that time. There were a lot of people involved in our business. I was one of the youngest ones and there were a lot of people ahead of me. But there were very few people that knew him like I did. I mean I had personal contact with him.
- JE:** Because you had been fishing and hunting and all of those kind of things you had been building since you were 22 or 23 years old.
- DP:** But I didn't know that I was building.
- JE:** Right.
- DP:** It just happened.
- JE:** So he felt a special affinity to you when you came into the office. I like this guy and I want him around.
- DP:** Well, he spent time with me. He would come into my office. He would call me and ask me to come to his home and we would discuss certain things. He didn't come to the office on a regular basis. You would go to him. I remember he told me one time when he was off in Europe and he wanted me to come over. He said, "I pay people to come to me so I don't have to go to the office." Well, when you are in your 20s, that's great.
- JE:** So you work in accounting, by that time, you knew you had caught the eye of H.A. Chapman. So no matter how difficult that was for you to sit behind that desk, you knew you had to stay there. Is that true?

**DP:** Yes, in a sense. I had a job offer. We moved from the Enterprise Building at 6th and Boston. That's where I first went to work. It was next door to Nelson's Buffeteria. Shortly after I went to work for him, within the next two years, we moved to the old NBT Building at 3rd and Boston. The Chapman family had controlling interest of that bank. We located at 501 NBT Building and we were there for many, many years. On the 5th floor of that building was Travelers Insurance regional office. They had a much larger office than we had. I don't know how I became friends with the manager of that office, but he came down to see me one day and wanted me to consider going to work for Travelers. They were going to put me in a training program. I would have to go to New York for six months and then I would be a regional manager somewhere, but they wouldn't tell me where that might be. They were offering me more money than I was making working for Chapman by the time I got out of training. I strongly considered that. But I didn't want to go to Bismarck, North Dakota, or Fargo, or someplace that I had never been that I just didn't like. They would not commit on where you might go, not even to a region. So I turned that down and that was one of my more wise decisions.

## Chapter 6 - 4:40

### H. Allen's Personality

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**John Erling:** Tell us how you moved up the ranks. You were an accountant and then what happened to you?

**Donne Pitman:** Mr. Carlson who was the manager of the business at that time became ill. He became incapable of running the business and there was no back up. I certainly could not run the business. I was too young and too immature. I did not have the background.

**JE:** You were still in your 20s?

**DP:** Yes. But I was probably the only person in the office that Mr. Chapman knew well enough to have confidence in. So I was trying to coordinate the business with Mr. Chapman and I kind of got thrown into this. He had confidence in me, maybe too much confidence. But I did help him a great deal in some areas-some things that he didn't know about that I was able to tell him about, that meant a lot to him. I won his confidence and then I had to keep that confidence.

**JE:** I wonder what this says about him. He could have gone out and hired to most high-powered accountant in the world.

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** But he chose to stick with you.

**DP:** Mr. H.A. Chapman was somewhat insecure and he didn't like new faces. He wanted people around him that he knew and he trusted and that he had confidence in. For some reason, I got on that side of him. He relied on me for a lot of personal things that had nothing to do with our business.

**JE:** Meaning you would do personal errands or trips or whatever?

**DP:** Yes, errands and trip. He would ask me to come down and spend a week with him on his yacht.

**JE:** Which was in California?

**DP:** He based it in the summer in Florida and then in the winter in the Caribbean and the Bahamas. He would just call me and want me to come down.

**JE:** Just to hang out?

**DP:** Hang out and talk about business. He would always give some excuse but really it was just to hang out. We became very good friends.

**JE:** Did he have friends?

**DP:** He had some but not many and I think that was because he was nervous about people. If you have great wealth like the Chapman family did, when you meet someone, there's always that inference that they want something. He told me one time. "Donne, you can go on a business trip to Denver, stay at the Brown Palace and before dinner go down to the Oak Room Bar, sit down at the bar and have a drink. Some guy will come by and sit down next to you and you can start talking to him and you may have something in common in our business. I can't do that. It's been ingrained into me that I have to be careful about who I talk to because most people will know who I am and they will want something. There are kidnappings there are all kind of problems. That's not a problem I had because I had no wealth. I was just being friendly. That was easy for me.

**JE:** How much influence did his father James have on H.A.?

**DP:** Well, I think the training that he got from his father was immense. But we had no business dealings during the time I worked for him with his father. We did not drill any wells jointly. We had equity holdings that were the same, but nothing that we had to discuss.

**JE:** What was their relationship like?

**DP:** It wasn't a normal father/son relationship. It wasn't cold.

**JE:** It was distant?

**DP:** Somewhat distant, yes. They didn't have dinner on a regular basis or drop over to see one another. I took H.A. Chapman to my father and mother's house on many occasions. I always thought that he liked the relationship that I had with my father and mother because it was cordial. I had a little ranch over near Tahlequah. My mother and father eventually moved out on this ranch and they just loved it. Mr. Chapman loved to go over

with me, particularly if we had some new calves or new foal. My mother would always have cookies or brownies and a hot pot of coffee. We would go in and sit at the kitchen table and partake. I could see that he really enjoyed that. Nobody wanted anything. Now, put on your boots and jacket and let's go see the new foal. (Laughter) He really liked that.

**JE:** There was a warmth and a coziness there that felt good to him.

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** Did he live in a huge mansion here in Tulsa?

**DP:** No. He lived two places during his life while I worked for him. He lived just off of 31st and Utica on 32nd Street. I think his address was 1631 East 32nd Street. It was a very nice house but it was a small two-bedroom. It had a beautiful pool area and a guest home out back. But if you were to drive by the house it wasn't opulent at all. It was nothing like you would think someone with his wealth would have. Then he bought a house on Bolewood from Julius Bankoff and redid that house and lived there until his demise.

**JE:** Bolewood?

**DP:** Yes, it's off of 46th Street, just off of Lewis.

## Chapter 7 - 5:40

### H. Allen and money

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**John Erling:** Was he very careful with the way he spent his money? Sometimes people with wealth don't want to spend much. How was he in that area?

**Donne Pitman:** If he wanted a new yacht or a jet, he wasn't very careful. He would say, "I want it." I remember he one time summoned me to buy him a new Cadillac. This new Cadillac El Dorado came out. He had a friend through racing in Milwaukee that had a Cadillac dealership. He had specs that he wanted on that car, a certain type of interior and wheels and things that wouldn't interest me. But he wanted me to fly up and get that car and pick it up for him. They were going to ship it up from Detroit to Milwaukee to his friend and I was going to drive it back to Tulsa. He never asked what it cost. That was not important, just getting what he wanted was important. Now, you're not going to break him on car, but he never asked. He just said, "Go get me that car." A boat or a yacht was basically the same thing. He never had a huge yacht, but paying for it wasn't a problem and paying for a view was not a problem. Just get it done. That was his attitude. Now on the other hand, I always had this situation with him. If you are traveling with him-and I did travel with him all around Europe and the Mediterranean and the Caribbean and the Bahamas-he would

never pick up a check. He always had a large number of hundred dollar bills in his wallet and a stash of credit cards. But when the check would come he would just bow his head. It was my responsibility to pick up that check. He knew that I was putting it on an expense account, but he would not pick up a check. He would put it on a credit card, but getting him to pay cash for something would be like pulling a tooth. He was not going to part with a dollar bill. (Laughter) I never understood that.

**JE:** What kind of a business mind did he have? Did he learn business from his father so that when he started his own company he was primed and ready to go? Was he a natural businessman?

**DP:** I think he learned from his father.

**JE:** Do you think the wealth he came from helped him in his own business?

**DP:** Yes, I do. He had a good start.

**JE:** So he was able to use family money to start out?

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** But then certainly that company would have failed if he hadn't managed it properly?

**DP:** That's correct, but it grew.

**JE:** Okay, talk to us about the growth of that company.

**DP:** We had a lot of production in Kansas, which was relatively shallow production, inexpensive wells. A 3,500-foot well in Kansas was a deep well. We had a lot of wells up there that were in the 2,000-2,500 foot well range. Those were not all that expensive. We also had some production in Oklahoma- probably the max depth was 6,500 feet. We ventured into southern Arkansas right on the Louisiana line and hit the biggest thing we had ever hit called the Walker Creek Field. That was 11,000 feet. That was a lot more expensive, but it was prolific.

**JE:** Would he be known as a wildcatter?

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** His father was not a wildcatter?

**DP:** Oh no, his father was a wildcatter.

**JE:** Okay. The information I read said his father wasn't a wildcatter, but he would go in and buy leases on land that had been explored and that's not true.

**DP:** Well, he would do that when he could but there were not that many available.

**JE:** So you had to be a wildcatter.

**DP:** Yeah.

**JE:** Explain the term wildcatter for those who may not know that word.

**DP:** Well, that's where you explore for oil and gas in a virgin area. Now you try to get as close in to proven production as you can, but the competition for those leases are so great, that if you are going to stay in the oil business you are going to have to wildcat. You're going

to have to come up with prospects, which you do through geology. Your geologist will pinpoint as closely as possible where he or she thinks there is oil production available. You don't know until you drill the hole whether there is oil or gas down there. That's what wildcatting is.

**JE:** Were there explorations or wildcatting that were major failures? Did you have dry holes?

**DP:** Oh, always. You're going to have dry holes, that's just part of the business.

**JE:** And he knew that and it didn't affect him at all?

**DP:** Well, it affects you, but you know that you are not going to hit every well.

**JE:** Did he like to visit the oil sites himself?

**DP:** He did. I took him on numerous occasions to visit our production facilities.

**JE:** And he enjoyed being around that?

**DP:** Oh yes, he enjoyed that.

**JE:** What about the roustabouts that worked there—did he talk to them?

**DP:** Yes, he talked to them. I would introduce him to them and of course they really enjoyed that. But he enjoyed wearing his blue jeans and his khaki shirt and getting out in the field.

**JE:** His father was kind of that way too wasn't he?

**DP:** Yes, he was.

**JE:** It sounds like H. Allen—

**DP:** —patterned his life—I think he wanted to sort of after his father.

**JE:** Their personalities were fairly similar because they were quiet and reticent to the public?

**DP:** That's right. Their personalities were very similar.

**JE:** H.A. was probably not into the social scene in this town?

**DP:** He was not in the social scene at all. He had two or three close families that he would do things with. For example, he enjoyed my wife very much. She would cook for him.

**JE:** Your wife's name is?

**DP:** Sandie. He would request if we were going to have a little dinner party for he and Mrs. Chapman and her friends that Sandie prepare a certain dish. There were simple, little things that his cook would make anytime he wanted but he would never request. But he loved for her to make homemade chili and he loved for her to make brown beans and ham hocks and cornbread. She told me one time, she said, "You know, I'll make him anything he wants, but that what he requested." I remember coming in from the office one day and his car was sitting in front of my house. When I walked in he was in at the counter area in the kitchen and my wife was at the stove stirring something. I walked in and I said, "What are you doing at my house while I am at the office? You know, you and my wife here together doesn't look good!" He said, "I am trying to teach her how to make homemade mayonnaise." (Laughter)

**Chapter 8 - 5:42****Mary K. Chapman**

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**John Erling:** Did you ever all of a sudden say, wow, here I am this kid from Catoosa and he is coming to my house and he's doing this and we are like this? Did you review that in your mind from time to time?

**Donne Pitman:** I did on a regular basis. I sure did. I'll give you a story that sums it up. We had corporate jets back when we had the oil business. I was en route from Tulsa to Augusta, Georgia to play The Masters golf course with a friend of mine from Tulsa who's a member, with our wives. We lift off and have our breakfast. We were going to get there and have lunch and then play. As we were flying along, this friend of mine says, "Donne, in all of your wildest dreams, did you ever think that you would be living the way that you live?" I looked at him and I said, "Bob, I didn't know people even lived this way." (Laughter)

**JE:** Let's talk about his wife, Mary K. Chapman. She was born in 1920 and died in 2002 when she was 81 years old. She graduated from the University of Tulsa.

**DP:** She did. She was a nurse.

**JE:** Do you know how Allen and Mary met?

**DP:** I do. He had been ill and needed a nurse at home and she was doing home health nursing, where instead of working in a hospital or a doctor's office, she was a private nurse. This was before I came to work full time. But probably Mr. Carlson who was running the business then hired her to be his full-time nurse at his home. He took a liking to her and they ended up getting married.

**JE:** So that's how they met?

**DP:** Yes, she was his nurse.

**JE:** Were there children from this marriage?

**DP:** No children from that marriage. They both had been married previously. She had no children and he had a son. His son now lives just outside of Memphis in Mississippi.

**JE:** So that would be Harry Allen Chapman, Junior?

**DP:** Correct.

**JE:** So did you see them a lot-Mary and Allen together?

**DP:** Yes, the majority of their social life was spent together. If you went to dinner, you would go with both of them. If you went down on the yacht they would both be there.

**JE:** What was her personality like?

**DP:** She was much more outgoing than he was but she was not social. She was not a socialite. She had a real strong feeling for the less fortunate and was highly involved in charity work in Tulsa. She wanted those that didn't have to be able to get along well. Catholic Charities

was one of her favorite charities and The Little Lighthouse. She didn't just send them a check. She would take them things they needed.

**JE:** She was hands-on?

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** That all met the profile of the Chapmans, because James Chapman and his wife Leta were all about giving to charitable institutions.

**DP:** Right. I think that carried over to Allen Chapman and then from Allen to Mary Chapman. But she grew up in a totally different economic background than he did. She was much less fortunate. She had this strong feeling to help those that were downtrodden.

**JE:** I am told she could be seen in Tulsa buying a truckload of blankets to give to the poor.

**DP:** That's right. She would give that to Catholic Charities and the homeless shelter.

**JE:** And she would even hand out blankets single-handedly?

**DP:** Yes, she would. She would hand out fans in the summer and air-conditioners.

**JE:** And obviously she would not look for any attention when she did that.

**DP:** In fact, she kind of shunned it.

**JE:** Do you have any stories of them together as a couple?

**DP:** She really liked to play slot machines, which is kind of an unusual thing. They would dock their yacht in Nassau at a place called Hurricane Hole that was probably three blocks from the Casino. There were several restaurants in conjunction with the Casino and the hotels there. I'm talking about very nice, elegant restaurants. They enjoyed having a nice dinner and then gambling. She would play the slot machines and he would shoot craps. (Laughter) It was fun. Neither one ever won or lost any large amount of money. I mean, you are not going to lose much on a slot machine and he wouldn't bet much on craps, but he enjoyed the challenge.

**JE:** That just seems strange doesn't it?

**DP:** That does seem strange. But they liked it and after he passed away she continues to use the boat and do her gambling and have her friends down. When she would be in Tulsa, she would like to go to Las Vegas. She always stayed at the same place, The Golden Nugget, which is not one of the big fancy hotels, but they knew her. They took care of her. They comped a lot of things and she liked that. She liked for me to take her out there in the corporate jet at the time. I don't know why, because I seldom spent the night. But we would go out and get on the jet. She would usually take either a lady friend or a couple with her. We had a driver and a car out there. We would get picked up at the airport and take us straight to the Golden Nugget. The concierge knew me when I walked in and I would go get her registered and make sure the room was fine. Then I would go back and get on the plane and come home. Four or five days later I would go back and get her. For some reason, I was that security blanket for her. Now, if I was involved with something and

couldn't be there, my wife would sometimes fill that void because Mrs. Chapman felt very comfortable with her. My daughter, who works here in the office with us now, has made that trip a few times. We had a woman more her age that I had introduced Mrs. Chapman to. Once or twice when something would be needed at her home or if I was out of town- I would have this lady, her name was Wanda Roper, I would have Wanda take her to Vegas.

## Chapter 9 - 4:42

### H. Allen Stories

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**Donne Pitman:** I've got another great story about Allen Chapman. We were at 501 NBT Building in downtown Tulsa. On the third floor was a barbershop. I always got my hair cut there. One day I got a call at the office from Mr. Chapman. He said, "Donne, I need a hair cut badly. There's a barber shop in our building." I said, "Yes." He said, "Would you call and see if I could come in this afternoon?" I called down and I talked to this fellow named Bruce. He had been there forever. I said, "Bruce, Mr. Chapman needs a haircut. Do you have any openings this afternoon?" He said, "Sure." He gave me a time and I told him I would have Mr. Chapman there. So I go pick him up and bring him down. I told him I had an appointment for him. I let him out of the car right in front of the building. I said, "I'm just going to go to the parking garage now. Just get on the elevator and get off on the third floor. When you walk out there's big glass windows and Bruce will be in the barbershop. He's got a gal there who does manicures and shoeshine boy and all of that. When you finish, just come on up two floors on the elevator and we can discuss some business and then I'll take you home when you are ready. So he does that. He comes up to the office and he's all slicked up. He's had a haircut and it's obvious that he had a shave. He didn't shave every day. Anyway, I take him home and he was pleased. He said, "I really like that Bruce guy." About a week later I go down to Bruce to get a haircut. In those days haircuts were two dollars. I automatically when I finished said, "Bruce, what do I owe you?" He said, "Seventeen-fifty." I said, "Seventeen-fifty? Your price has gone up just a little." He said, "No, your haircut's still two dollars. You know that friend of yours that you brought in here the other day? He got a shampoo, a moustache trim, a shave, a shoeshine and a manicure. When he was finished, I took the cape off of him and he said, "Thank you for everything- just put that on Donne Pitman's account." (Laughter) He said, "I knew where to find you." I said, "He wouldn't reach for his wallet would he?" He said, "He didn't even give you a hint." (Laughter) He said, "But I knew who he was and I knew he was certainly good for it." (Laughter) That was typical of him.

**John Erling:** But he knew that a lot of these things would be paid for out of his money anyway.

**DP:** Oh sure.

**JE:** But when the cash was in his pocket.

**DP:** Right. It was secure. I've got another, if you like stories. We were in Paris one time and he had two sets of guests. One of the really famous, fancy restaurants there is called Tour d'Argent. It's on the Seine River on the top of a building that's about eight stories high, overlooking the river and Notre Dame. It's a beautiful setting as the lights come on Notre Dame at night. We had dinner and my wife was with me so we had about 8 or 10 people there. This place is expensive. When the bill came, Mrs. Chapman told him to pay it. I thought he is not going to want to pay that bill. She was afraid that someone else was going to get the bill. He reaches in his pocket and pulls out his wallet and pulls out a Diner's Club card and hands it to the waiter. The waiter was gone for a lengthy period of time and he comes back. In broken English he says that this card has expired. It was like five or eight years expired. So Mr. Chapman again gets his wallet out and he thumbs through there and he hands him an American Express. The waiter leaves and in a few minutes he comes back and he said, "Sir, I am sorry, this card has also expired." (Laughter) Mrs. Chapman just grabbed the check and said, "Donne, pay for it!" (Laughter) I told him later, I said, "You know when you opened that wallet, moths flew out." (Laughter) But he gets a new credit card and he would just put it in and he would never take the old one out.

**JE:** Did he enjoy humor? Like when you said the moths flew out? That was okay? You could say that?

**DP:** Oh, yeah, a little bit. He could, yeah. My wife and I were in Monte Carlo one time. We had walked one block from the hotel where he had his suite called the Hotel Hermitage over to the Hotel de Paris next to the Casino. We had a nice dinner and came back to the hotel. There was kind of a long corridor that you had to walk down. He was slow. He walked with a cane. So my wife and I and Mrs. Chapman, we were way ahead of him. We turn and looked back at him and my wife says, "Watch this." She moved into a little door area where you couldn't see her. (Laughter) As he walks by, she reaches out and pinches him on the rear end. He had no idea she was there. He jumped and screamed. At first it made him kind of mad. I thought, oh my gosh. We were all laughing so much that he started laughing. He looked at Sandie and said. "Sandie, don't ever do that again! I could have a heart attack!"

**JE:** You said he walked with a cane?

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** Why was that?

**DP:** He had a limp and I don't know what it was. It was later in life. He had a leg problem and I don't know what caused it. But he needed that cane more for stability than anything.

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**Chapter 10 – 2:39**  
**Pitman Car Wreck**

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**Donne Pitman:** You said you liked stories.

**John Erling:** I do!

**DP:** I've got another great one. I had not worked for him very long and lived relatively close to him. This Cadillac I was telling you about that he had sent me to get. He was so proud of that and he was down in the Bahamas on his yacht and he said, "Donne, about once every 10 days or two weeks I want you to go get my car and drive for at least a day or maybe two days just to keep the battery up and keep it running. I don't like my cars to sit for long periods of time." So, I would do that. Boy I liked driving that new Cadillac. I had a son that was grade-school age that was playing summer baseball. So I got in from the office one day and I was running late. My son says, "Dad I've got to go to practice! I'm going to be late!" So I put him in the car and we go to practice. I dropped him off and I said, "I'm going home to change into my Bermuda shorts and t-shirt and I'll be back in a minute." I still had a coat and tie on. I'm driving home in my neighborhood and a young lady runs a stop sign and hits his car broadside and tears the side out of that new car that didn't even have 800 miles on it. I know I've got a problem now. She had a license. She just ran a stop sign. I mean I've got to do everything I can because I am in his car and he's got great wealth and there could be a lawsuit and I always worried about that. So I called the police and they gave her a citation and sent me on my way. I got her insurance information. I go home and get in my car and go back to ball practice. When I finally get up the courage, I think I've got to call him and tell him what's happened. So I do it very sheepishly and I was nervous. I called and walked him through this scenario, thinking there was going to be an explosion. His first question was, "Did you call the police?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Did you get a citation?" I said, "No. They gave the girl a citation because she ran a stop sign and she admitted it." He said, "Were there any injuries?" I said, "No." He said, "I don't like cars that have been in wrecks. I don't like to drive them. Go get me another car just like that one." (Laughter) He never asked what it cost or anything. He just said, "Go get me another car. This is not the end of the world. I just like that car. I want the same color and everything. Just get me another one. I won't be home for another two months and you'll have plenty of time to drive it." (Laughter) Years later, my daughter, who was also in grade school, who now has kids in college says, "Dad, when you came in driving that wrecked car that belonged to Mr. Chapman, I just knew you were going to get fired." (Laughter)

**JE:** Did you think that too?

**DP:** I didn't think I'd get fired over it because it wasn't my fault.

**JE:** Right.

**DP:** But I certainly thought that he would be upset with the situation, but he wasn't.

**JE:** Did you replace the car?

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** And then when he saw it?

**DP:** He was pleased and everything was fine. When he got back to Tulsa, that new car was sitting in his garage."

## Chapter 11 - 5:53

### Philanthropy

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**John Erling:** But as we talk about the lifestyle of the rich and famous, let's come back to how much they have given to the Tulsa Community through their foundations. They were part of the Tulsa Performing Arts Center. We have the Chapman Music Hall, and that comes from?

**Donne Pitman:** That comes from both sides of the family, his mother, Leta Chapman and Allen and Mary.

**JE:** As you've already mentioned Tulsa's Little Light House received money from the Chapman Foundation. We have the TU Stadium that was known as Skelly Stadium. How much did they donate to TU for that?

**DP:** The Chapman Foundation?

**JE:** Yes.

**DP:** We made a \$9 million contribution—that wasn't the entire cost, but that's what they needed to get it done.

**JE:** So it's now known as Skelly Field at Chapman Stadium, and that comes from?

**DP:** H.A. Chapman and the Mary K. Chapman Funds. That was somewhat of a sensitive area because John Stewart is the grandson of Mr. Skelly and he's a good friend of mine. He lives in Tulsa.

**JE:** His father was Harold Stewart.

**DP:** Yes, Harold Stewart, who is also a good friend of mine. When we were considering rebuilding the stadium, the University suggested we call it Chapman Stadium. I'm a little reluctant to just take the name off of the stadium that was the original stadium name. So I called John Stewart and I tell him what we were considering doing and told him I was wondering how he would feel about that if we were to change the name. I said, "You know, your granddad is why that stadium is where it is. It's a landmark." He said, "There's surely

a way that we can keep both names involved in the thing. I would like for my granddad Skelly to have his name there.” I don’t recall who came up with that but it was someone at the University. They suggested calling it Skelly Field at Chapman Stadium. I said, “That sounds good to me, but let me run it by John.” So I called John Stewart and he checked with his sister and they said, “That sounds fine to us.” John made a comment that really stuck with me. He said, “I can’t think of two better names to have on that stadium than Chapman and Skelly.”

**JE:** Yes. It’s nice to keep them both because the Skelly name goes way, way back and so does the Chapman name. The fact that we can have both names alive in our community is great.

**DP:** Yeah. That worked out fine and everybody is pleased.

**JE:** We pointed out earlier that Allen was not an athlete himself.

**DP:** No. I would say that if Allen Chapman ever went to a football game, it would have probably been in high school. The basketball arena, we call it the Convocation Center. We were involved in that also. I know he never went to that one because he was gone at that time. But even when they played other places and played down at the Civic Center, he just wasn’t interested in that.

**JE:** So as you have given so generously to Skelly Field at Chapman Stadium, let’s remember that the connection to TU goes all the way to James, his father.

**DP:** That’s correct.

**JE:** He helped the school out. They were teetering on bankruptcy and his father James came to the rescue of Tulsa University.

**DP:** I think James Chapman as well as some other philanthropic individuals in the city. But I heard the story that they saved the university. They did the same thing for NBT (National Bank of Tulsa). At the time that that bank was about to go under it was called the Exchange National Bank. Mr. Chapman and some others bought it and Chapman ended up in control of that bank.

**JE:** We also have the Chapman Centennial Green downtown.

**DP:** Right. We just finished it last year.

**JE:** It’s nice to see all of that green in the middle of downtown.

**DP:** Yes. He would have liked that. He liked green space. H.A. Chapman and Jim Chapman too—they loved nature.

**JE:** So he was a nature lover and enjoyed being out in the open.

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** We also know that the couple donated \$1 million dollars to TU in 1968 to establish the James Chapman Hall, which houses the College of Nursing and Applied Sciences.

**DP:** I remember the School of Nursing because Mrs. Chapman was a graduate of the school of nursing there. Then there’s also the Mary K. Chapman School of Communicable

Disorders—for children, or adults too, with speech and hearing disorders. I was involved in that one. One of the requirements there was that no child will ever be turned down for services due to lack of funds.

**JE:** What areas does the Foundation give to?

**DP:** We have a relatively broad scope in the trust instrument, but our primary emphasis is in health and education. Most of the educational giving is at the college level, but we do support preparatory schools in our community and even the public schools in some instances for special projects. We give a lot of money to medical research. We do work with the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, which is a premier research facility. No clinical work at all, just research. We give quite a bit of money to the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. I was just there last week. They do both research and clinical. In fact, their clinical side does a lot of the testing of new drugs. There's a place on Long Island, which is called Cold Springs Harbor, which is a research facility. They are also one of the premier medical research facilities in the nation. These are all world-renowned institutions. We give to Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation in Oklahoma City. We give to St. John and we have given some to Hillcrest when it was Hillcrest. We supported and gave a considerable amount of money to the Children's Hospital of Saint Francis. We keep most of our money in our community. A limited amount of money, but money that is greatly needed we give to social services in Tulsa. There's a great need in Tulsa for social services. We naturally support the United Way, but many of those organizations that benefit from the United way receive grants from us aside from what we give to the United Way.

## Chapter 12 - 7:21

### Pitman - Trustee

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**John Erling:** When you consider requests to the Foundation, do you say what Allen and Mary would want? Do they sign off in your head as you think about this?

**Donne Pitman:** Yes. I always think of that. What would they want us to do?

**JE:** You know, as you were fortunate that you met them, also they were fortunate that you were left behind as they passed on. It was left in your hands because you are the only one—there isn't any one on the family that would have managed the Foundation or had the expertise for it. I guess I am complimenting you now but it has kind of worked out that way. Here is somebody that Allen met in his early 20s and today as we sit here, June 30th, 2009, that relationship is still paying off for him.

**DP:** Well, I hope. I know the grandchildren. I am their trustee. I have known them since their birth. I know their son. I am not his trustee anymore, but it's because of some legal issues that came about at Mr. Chapman's death—one trust stopped and one trust started. But I was his trustee up until that point. In fact, I asked Allen Chapman one time, I said, "You are making me co-trustee of your son's trust with a bank. He and I are within one year of the same age. I don't want to create a problem for you there. He may not want me to be his trustee." He said he couldn't care less. I said, "Well, if it becomes a problem I will resign, because I do not want to create a rift there." It's never been a problem. I talk to him on numerous occasions. In fact, when he comes to Tulsa, which he does once or twice a year, he will call me and we will go to dinner. The grandchildren I am much closer to because they are younger. I have been their trustee since their birth. I was there through their high school and college years and buying them a car and all of that stuff. It's been fun.

**JE:** So they are children of Junior?

**DP:** Yes, and they are grown now. The son is, I am going to guess 41 and the girls are in their late 30s. The girls are both married. The son has never married. One girl lives in San Diego and has a son and the other daughter and her husband live in Tucson. They have two sons.

**JE:** Since this is a part of education and we want people to generally know about the Chapman name and their legacy. This Foundation and the money that comes through this Foundation will live forever and ever?

**DP:** The Foundation is set up in perpetuity. There's another trustee that we have appointed and we have the right to terminate it if we want to give it all away and the trust is gone. But if we don't do that, this trust goes in perpetuity. Hopefully it will continue to grow. It has grown. Now the last year and a half has not been too good, but I know we are ahead of the national average.

**JE:** Because in your training as you started out as an accountant, you had to learn to be an investor.

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** Did the Foundation invest in the stock market, or real estate or was it a combination?

**DP:** Mostly the stock market. We call it equities. We have had real estate, but never any income-bearing real estate. We would buy raw land and then sell it off as it increases in value. Basically the way we got into a lot of equities is we would sell these oil properties to companies and do a tax-free stock exchange—one corporate stock for another. So we have ended up with a lot of international oil stocks and they have done well.

**JE:** Students who are listening to this—I don't know if you have had a chance to talk to students and tell them about your life or what they can draw from this. You started out in your early 20s and through your personality you were endeared to Mr. Chapman. Some

student might listen to this and say, wow, I want to get into this business. What do you say to these students?

**DP:** To get into the business that I am in, it's not something you go apply for. It's something that builds over the years with confidence and association. You just grow with it. You don't go apply for a job as a trustee of a foundation. I don't know how you would apply to a wealthy individual as a manager of his business. (Laughter) He picks that person and it's usually someone he or she knows. I remember when Mr. Chapman passed away, I probably shouldn't say this but I will anyway. Mrs. Chapman, eight months after his demise was down on her yacht in Miami. I needed some papers signed. I was co-executor of his estate with her. Of course, she was never here and she was not doing any of the work. Ralph Abercrombie was involved in the business at the time. He was an attorney and had been with NBT. As an executor, I had hired him to be the attorney for the estate. So he went with me down to Miami and we get on the yacht. I brought a lot of papers that needed to be signed for the estate, which she has to sign with me as co-executor. At the time, the fee on that is not too bad. It was set by statute and it's a large estate, but we are sharing it 50/50. I remember sitting down with her after we had signed all of the papers. I looked at Mrs. Chapman and I said, "You know Mrs. Chapman, there's a considerable fee that's going to be paid out of the estate to you and I as executors. But I want you to stop and think about this a minute. You are not even there. You are not involved in what we are doing except for me bringing things down here for you to sign and we discuss it. I really think it's a little unfair for us to share that fee 50/50 when I am doing all of the work." She says, "Well, what do you think it should be?" I said, "I think it would be more fair at 80/20 percent." She was getting a large portion of the estate anyway. She thought about it for a minute and she said, "That sounds fine to me." I said, "Ralph, would you draw those papers up please." (Laughter) Then we finish our business and I look at her and I say, "You know Mrs. Chapman you and I have been partners in the oil business. You and I have this little company and we are partners. It's been very good. I don't know what you are planning to do now with your wealth. Do you want to stay in the oil business or do you want to sell out? What do you want to do? It's not my business, but you may not want me to continue to do for you what I did for Mr. Chapman. If so, that's not a problem. We will always be friends. I wouldn't be where I am and I wouldn't have what I have if it was not for your family. If you don't want me to continue on in this capacity after we finish the estate, all you have to do is tell me and there won't be any hard feelings." She looked up and she said, "No Donne, I want you to continue to run my business just like you did Allen's." I said, "Okay. I will be happy to do that. In fact, I would like that. What do you plan to pay me?" (Laughter) She looked over and she didn't have any idea what I was being paid. She said, "Whatever Allen was

paying you is fine with me. The same deal you had with Allen you can have with me.” I said, “We are now partners in a different capacity.” I continued right on through until she passed away. That was in 1979.

**JE:** Did you ask her that question just to be nice?

You probably knew what her answer was going to be but you just needed to say it?

**DP:** Yes. It needed to be asked and I didn’t want her to think that I need to do this for him.

Or because she thought, I don’t want him mad at me. So I made it easy for her.

**JE:** Yes.

## Chapter 13 - 7:00

### \$25,000 Cufflinks & Studs

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**John Erling:** The size of the Foundation, going back to what it was to what it is today. Can you give us some numbers?

**Donne Pitman:** In 1964 we had a little downturn and total assets dropped to \$10 million. In 1964 \$10 was a lot of money, but it had taken quite a fall. Before the recession hit, we were a little over \$300 million. We are somewhere in the \$250 million range now, so we have held our own.

**JE:** The combination of these trusts would be even more than that.

**DP:** Well, that’s the H.A. and Mary K. Chapman Trusts. The Jim and Leta Chapman Trust, that’s much bigger. You commented that when he died his estate was \$129 million. This is all public record and I haven’t looked in probably two years, but those trusts were in excess of probably \$1.5 billion at one point.

**JE:** So that trust will continue on forever and ever as well.

**DP:** I think so. I’ve read it but I have forgotten the details on that one.

**JE:** The community is just so fortunate to have these kinds of people. Tulsa is blessed with a number of generous foundations.

**DP:** Oh, absolutely, Per capita, Tulsa has many more large foundations in excess of \$100 million than most cities. Philanthropy in Tulsa has run rampant for many years. I think it’s because children grew up in families that were givers. Their parents poured back into the community, so their children became givers and their children became givers. The LaFortunes, the Chapmans, the Barnards, the Warrens, these are all large foundations that do great work for the city of Tulsa and the entire community.

**JE:** There was a time when we expected the oil business, Skelly and all of that to be giving

and then when the oil business moved out of town, we thought, oh my what are we going to do? But we realized we had all these foundations that are still giving.

**DP:** Yes.

**JE:** Are there any other stories? You are a great storyteller.

**DP:** Well, I can think of two or three things. I came in from the office back in the late 1960s. I had not worked for Allen all that long. His car was in my driveway. I walk in and he says, "Well, I thought you would be coming in about now." I said, "What do you need?" You know, I could joke with him. He said, "I brought you a gift." He had a little container from Sloan's Jewelers in Utica Square. George Sloan was an old jeweler in Utica Square that Mr. Chapman had used for years and years. He would have things designed for him. He had a stud set that George Sloan had made for him. It was platinum with a sapphire in the center, surrounded by white diamonds and matching cuff links. It was not gaudy. He said, "I'm at the point in my life where I will probably never wear a tux again. I've worn a lot of them. I've worn this set. I had George Sloan make this for me years ago. I've really enjoyed them. I want you to have them." So I accepted them and I took them down to Bruce Weber. I wanted to get them appraised because I knew they are expensive. I gave them to him and he looks at them and says, "Boy, those are nice. Where did you get these?" I said, "Mr. Chapman gave them to me. They were in a Sloan's box and he told me that Mr. Sloan made those for him." Of course he knew George Sloan. Two or three days go by and Bruce Weber calls me. He says, "Do you have any idea what those are worth?" I said, "No, I don't." He said, "Donne, I could give you \$15,000 for them and sell them and make a profit. If you go buy those today they would cost you \$25,000." (Laughter) He said, "He just gave them to you?" I said, "Yeah, he met me at my house and gave them to me." (Laughter) But that's the kind of guy he was. We were in Biarritz, France one time. It's a beautiful resort area right on the coast right at the point where France meets Spain. We were having dinner one night and he says, "Donne, Mary and I are talking about going to Monte Carlo. Why don't you check and see if we can get out of here and go over there? We'll probably have to fly into Nice because I don't think Monte Carlo has an airport." I had never been to Monte Carlo, so I didn't know. So anyway, I check airlines and I found out that to get out of Biarritz you have to take a commuter flight back to Paris or go to Geneva and then down to Monte Carlo. So I told him that. He said, "I don't want to do that. That's too much walking through airports and that's trouble. Don't they have chartered jets around here?" I said, "Well, I don't know but I am sure we can get one." He said, "Let's just do a non-stop flight." Again he never asked what it would cost. I chartered a little jet for us. We got on it and flew to Nice and had a car pick us up and take us to Monte Carlo. Just on the spur of the moment, let's do this.

**JE:** Don't they say if you've got to ask how much it cost you probably can't afford it?

**DP:** Yes. I have heard that. (Laughter)

**JE:** He could afford anything he wanted really.

**DP:** He could.

**JE:** So money was never an object to him.

**DP:** It was never an object, but as I have said he didn't flaunt it. If he wanted a new yacht he would buy it. If he wanted another airplane he would go buy it. He didn't flaunt it. He didn't have a G5. Now, we had nice jets, but it wasn't ostentatious.

**JE:** He could have bought more plane than he bought?

**DP:** Oh yes. More plane and more yacht. He was constantly having me look for a larger, different yacht. I flew up to Manitowoc, Wisconsin where they make the Burgers, which is the ultimate in yachts. I went with him to Amsterdam to the Feadship factory looking at Feadships. He just loved that.

**JE:** Now, his father James-

**DP:** Oh, he would never do that. No, he was more conservative and that was a waste.  
(Laughter)

**JE:** Doesn't it feel good? We all move to work for somebody that we feel like we are buddies with? You felt like you were a buddy then to Allen?

**DP:** That's right. I was a close friend and I knew that. About two weeks before he passed away he called me to his house. He knew that he was failing. We sat around and just reminisced for a while in his study. Finally he said, "You know I'm not going to be here forever. I don't know anything about your finances, but if there is anything you need that I can help you with. If you've got any bank debt or anything like that, we probably ought to take care of it now because I'm not going to be around forever." I looked at him and I said, "Mr. Chapman, thanks to you I'm in doggone good shape." He said, "Do you have any debt?" I said, "No." He said, "I could sure help you out of you needed it." I looked at him and I said, "Have I ever asked you for any money?" He said, "No." I said, "I probably never will, but if I ever do, you'll know that I really need it. I don't need it now." But that's the kind of guy he was.

**JE:** I was going to ask the question, how would you like us to remember him and maybe you have said it.

**DP:** He was a close friend. He didn't have many, but I knew that I was one of them. That meant a lot. A close friend you would never betray. You would never take from. He was a good man. He was a different man.

**Chapter 14 - 5:47****H. Allen & Children**

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**Donne Pitman:** One of my favorite stories about him is about my income. He didn't even know what I made. I mean it was one of those deals where I was working for Mr. Carlson and I had made my deal with him. I saved him a bunch of money one time on a deal. I mean millions of dollars. I got to thinking, I am not making all that much money and I saved him several million dollars. I knew that he knew it. I thought I was deserving of more money. How do you approach this guy? (Chuckle) So I called an accountant who did our outside audits. His name was Virgil Tilley, Sr. Virgil Tilley, Sr. had a son, Junior, who kept the business going for a while too. But Mr. Tilley was more Mr. Chapman's age and had had this accounting firm in Tulsa for years. So I called him. I knew that he knew Mr. Chapman well and would give me a straight shot. I told him my story that I had saved him these many millions of dollars. I told him that I think I am deserving of more money. He said, "How much are you making?" I told him. I think at the time I was making \$750/month. But this was back in the 1960s. He said, "How much do you want?" I said, "Well, I think I'm certainly deserving of \$1,250/month." Now that's a big percentage raise. He said, "Donne, I do too, but I don't make that decision." I said, "Well, tell me how I should go about this." He said, "I think you should call Allen Chapman and tell him you would like to sit down and visit with him about a business situation. He'll either say he will come to the office or he will say come to my house." I called him. He said, "Come on out." So I went out and I sat down with him and I hem and haw around and finally he said, "What did you come out here for? There's something on your mind." I told him my story. I told him I was making \$750/month and I thought I deserved at least \$1,250/month and here's why. He listened to me and he said, "Well, I agree. Go back and tell that accountant to give you a raise to \$1,250/month." I said, "Thank you Mr. Chapman. I appreciate that." You know, I had a couple of kids at the time. It meant a lot to me. I started out the door and he said, "Donne, when you're telling the accountant about that raise, tell him to make that retroactive back to the first of the year." This was in May. He said, "Give yourself a little bonus." I go back and call Mr. Tilley and I said, "I should have asked for \$1,500/month!" (Laughter) He said, "Well, I told you that he is a fair man."

**John Erling:** That's great. As I hear you tell this story—it's just so fascinating. Those who listen to this will be fascinated about how somebody could connect in his early 20s. Here you are 68 years old today and—

**DP:** It's the only job I have ever had.

**JE:** It's the only job you ever had and how that can all work because here's a man who trusted

you. He wasn't flamboyant. He could have gone out and hired the biggest accounting firm in the world. He didn't do that because he felt comfortable with you.

**DP:** Yes, he was comfortable and confidence builds over time.

**JE:** Did you ever screw up where he said, "Donne!"

**DP:** No. I made some mistakes, but I never had a big boo-boo no. Our business was always run very conservatively. You are going to drill some dry holes, but that's part of it. I remember when we were highly involved in the oil business, at least once a week—he had an apartment on Miami Beach, back when Miami Beach was really elegant and nice. The yacht place across the street—there's Collins Avenue and his apartment building, which was owned by the Rockefeller family. Across the street was the Indian River, which was the waterway. There were docks there and he kept his yacht there. He got to the point where he never used the apartment because he stayed on the yacht the whole time. I remember one time right after Andrea was born. She was like 5 or 6 weeks old. He calls me and he says, "Surely there is something I need to sign. Why don't you come down and spend a few days here? Mary and I are on the yacht in front of the apartment." He said, "Bring that new baby." He didn't particularly care for small children. I knew that. I said, "Oh, Mr. Chapman, babies cry a lot and we wouldn't be able to go out and have dinner like usual because of babysitters and all of that." He said, "Well, don't you have a nurse?" I said, "Well, we've got a lady staying with us, yes." He said, "Bring her." I said, "Where am I going to put her?" He said, "Well, the apartment is two bedrooms, you know that. You're the only one that has a key to it." (Laughter) He said, "There are guest rooms on each floor for the apartments. I can get her the room next door and she can stay there. Then she can babysit when you want her to. You can bring the plane so that's pretty easy." I said, "Well, Sandie is breastfeeding and all." He said, "Donne, come on down. Bring Sandie and the baby and this nurse." I said, "Okay." So we fly down there and get there in the evening. I remember this gal's name was Nanna. She kept Andrea and we go to dinner with them. He always slept late. The next morning I go over about 11am and I knew he would be having breakfast on the yacht. He is sitting there when I walked in. He always wore dark prescription glasses. He was looking at his eggs. He ate the same breakfast every morning. I walk over and I say, "You wanted me to bring Andrea and here she is." I just set her down like that (motioning) and he just went like this. You know. My wife took a picture and he was looking at her over those glasses with a big smile. When he died, that picture was on the bureau next to his chair.

**JE:** Wow.

**DP:** He didn't even like kids but he liked Nanna the nurse. He liked her. She was very efficient and wore a white uniform and when the baby needed to leave she would take it, but she never interfered. About the third day he said, "How long are you going to keep that

nurse?" I said, "Well, as long as we need her with the baby, but we're not going to keep her forever." He said, "I like her. When you decide to get rid of her, let me know. I may have a job for her. I like people that conduct themselves that way." I said, "Leave her alone until I am finished with her." He said, "I will. I'm not going to hire her out from under you." (Laughter) But you know he was always looking for some little edge there. That's the kind of person I like.

**JE:** So did he hire her later?

**DP:** No, no, he didn't. But that hit him right there. He said, "I like that lady. She's efficient. She knows when to be seen and when not to be seen."

**JE:** Yeah.

## Chapter 15 - 7:39

### Hold 'Em!

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**John Erling:** So he died at 60 and he lived a full life in those 60 years.

**Donne Pitman:** Yes.

**JE:** It sounds like it was fun to be Allen Chapman.

**DP:** Well it was. He loved traveling and he traveled extensively. He always did it first class. He was in The Ritz when he stayed in Paris. At the end of his life he would stay at a place called The Plaza Athénée, which is a small hotel. I'll never forget a friend of mine here in town, Dr. David Haggard and his wife. They were big French cooking people. They spoke French and they were going to Paris. He calls me and he says, "Donne, Kay and I are going to Paris. We know about The Ritz and The Bristol and some of the other ones. Where would you recommend that we stay that has a nice restaurant in it, that's a lovely hotel?" I said, "The Plaza Athénée." He said, "You would recommend it highly?" I said, "It's the neatest little hotel I have ever stayed at. It's nothing size wise like The Ritz or the Bristol, but you'll like it." So they go over to Paris and they stay there. He comes back and he calls me and he says, "Well, you've have never steered me wrong on any of my travels, but that Plaza Athénée was absolutely fabulous. You neglected to tell me one thing." I said, "What's that?" He said, "What the thing cost! The first morning we went down for eggs and bacon and it was \$40 a plate! That's the most expensive place I have ever stayed!" (Laughter) I said, "Well, I didn't know, I was on the expense account." (Laughter)

**JE:** That's funny. I was going to ask-did anybody ask to write a book about his life?

**DP:** No. No one ever inquired about that. Oklahoma University Press has written a book on James Chapman. It's not a book just on him. I think it's called *The Red River Oil Company*. That was one of his companies. He also had a company called the Magnolia Oil Company. It was more about the oil companies. It wasn't about the family.

**JE:** For students listening to this then, we can reference that book for further reading. The name of the book again was?

**DP:** I think it was just *McMan*.

**JE:** Because that was the name of their oil company. They put *McMan* together. That was a combination of the names of the two men that were in it. The "Mc" came from *McFarland* and the "Man" came from *Chapman*, so we had *McMan Oil Company*.

**DP:** Right. They would build oil companies and then sell out two or three times and they would take stock in different major oil companies. Before *Mobil* merged with *Exxon* we had a lot of both of their stocks. I would go to the *Mobil* annual meetings and I would go to what used to be *Standard Oil of Indiana* annual meetings and it ended up being *Amoco*.

**JE:** Because those companies had bought out?

**DP:** Yeah, and we had a lot of the stock. So, I'm in Atlanta for the *Mobil* annual shareholders meeting. I'm staying at *The Ritz-Carlton Hotel* downtown because that was where most of the *Mobil* people were going to stay. The meeting was at the *Civic Center*. I wasn't familiar with downtown Atlanta. I got up to go to breakfast on the day of the meeting. The meeting was at 10:30am or so. It's like 8 o'clock in the morning. I'm on the elevator going down to breakfast and the elevator stops at this floor and a fellow gets on in a dark suit. He's got a red *Mobil* emblem, a flag horse on his lapel. He had a briefcase in both hands and I presume he is a lawyer. I said, "You must be with *Mobil*." He said, "Yes I am." I said, "Well, I am here for the shareholders meeting. How far is it from the hotel to the *Civic Center*? Is it walking distance?" He said, "It's three or four blocks." I said, "It's a nice day, I may just walk." He said, "Go out the front and turn left." He gave me directions and then he asked, "What part of the south are you from?" I said, "I am from *Oklahoma*." He looked at me and he said, "Tulsa or *Oklahoma City*?" I said, "Tulsa." He said, "You don't by chance know the *Chapman* family there do you?" I said, "That's who I am here representing." He said, "You're kidding me. You know they are our largest shareholder?" I said, "Oh, I know that." (Laughter) He hands me his card and he says, "We have got a bunch of cars and drivers on call here. I'll just get a car to come and pick you up." I said, "No, thanks. I don't need that. A walk will be good for me." He said, "One other thing, do you know our Chairman *Rawleigh Warner*?" I said, "No, I know who he is. But I don't know him." He said, "After the meeting, he will hang around to talk to the *Press* but I would like for you to meet him. He should know you." So I hung around and sure enough I met the Chairman *Warner*. Then later this same guy sent me a gift from *Mobil*. Later, we were in *New York*. I was with

Mr. Chapman and he wants to visit with Rawleigh Warner regarding a problem they are having in Iran with the oil company. He said, "Call over at Mobil and see if you can get an appointment with Mr. Warner." I said, "I'm not sure I can do that. I may not be able to get through to Mr. Warner." But he remembered me. I told the secretary who I was. He said he would send a car over at 2pm that afternoon to pick us up. So we went over and we sat up on the top of their building and it was scenic kind of like this. He didn't sit behind his desk. We all sat around a little couch and we visited. Later, I was in Saratoga, Wyoming at a private golf club up there. I was out on the practice range one morning with a bunch of Williams people. Some guy walks up and taps me on the shoulder and it's Rawleigh Warner. He said, "I remember you and Mr. Chapman coming to see me up in New York Donne." Then I end up getting accepted into a golf club in Palm Beach, Florida and Mr. Warner was a member there, so we played golf several times. I remember the first time I saw him there I went up to him and I said, "You may not remember me..." and before I could finish he said, "No, you're from Tulsa and you represented the Chapman family. I remember you and Mr. Chapman coming to see me in New York." He had a great memory. He said, "I am retired now."

**JE:** So the Chapmans were the largest shareholders in Mobil Oil?

**DP:** Yes and they were also major shareholders in Exxon, and those two companies merged.

**JE:** This was because of the oil companies that James Chapman and his partner McFarland sold-

**DP:** Yes, and took stock.

**JE:** So over the years, what has happened? Are you still?

**DP:** That's our largest holding in the Foundation. The big trust, the James Chapman Trust, that was their largest holding too, but they've diversified out of it. You really shouldn't be concentrated in one asset, but boy, it's hard to sell it when it's doing so well and they pay a nice dividend.

**JE:** Again, you are still invested in Mobil and all of those to a large degree?

**DP:** We have a lot of Exxon Mobil stock and a lot of BP Amoco stock.

**JE:** All because of way back when.

**DP:** Way back and you just leave it alone. H.A. told me one time when I was talking to him about diversifying. I told him, "You've got too much concentration in one asset there." He looked at me and he said, "Dividends are pretty good on Mobil and Exxon. Donne I have a theory that if you buy good stocks or acquire good stocks, they are not to be sold, they are to be held. How many times have Exxon and Mobil split since you worked for us? That means two-for-one. That's how it just keeps getting bigger and bigger. Of course the value goes to half when it's two for one, then it will go back when it gets up to about \$100. The pot gets bigger and bigger.

**JE:** Right.

**DP:** But stocks are not be sold, they are to be bought and held.

**JE:** So do you abide by that to this day?

**DP:** Not 100 percent. I act in a fiduciary capacity as a trustee. I have a responsibility to be a prudent investor. Having 80 or 90 percent of your assets in one stock is not prudent. That stock can always go bad. I don't care how good it looks. They can always go bad. There are things that can happen. I've watched it. (Laughter)

**JE:** Well you've been very generous with your time. I really appreciate this. I just think the general public at large will be fascinated to hear this story.

**DP:** Well it's been a big part of my life. It's been fun. It's been a god ride.

**JE:** I've enjoyed this-it's been a good ride for me as well. Thank you, Donne. I appreciate it.

## **Chapter 16 - 0:21**

### **Conclusion**

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**Announcer:** You have just been given a glimpse into the personalities and lifestyle of H. Allen Chapman and Mary K. Chapman. Their generosity has helped people in Tulsa, the state of Oklahoma and beyond. Our thanks to Donne Pitman for sharing his behind-the-scenes knowledge of the Chapmans-heard on [VoicesofOklahoma.com](http://VoicesofOklahoma.com).