

OH-3098, Howard Wilson, 5-1-2015, Thermopolis, WY In Flight

BARBARA: [00:00:00] OK, I'm going to tell the machine who we are and what we're doing. This is Barbara Bogart, it's May 1st, 2014. I'm in Thermopolis, Wyoming with Dr. Howard Wilson talking about his experiences in aviation. OK, take it away.

HOWARD: OK. My exposure and experience to aviation actually began in college when I went to Florida State and was in the Air Force ROTC, which is obligatory three-year service after you get your commission.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: So I did, went in the Air Force. Started flying training down in south Texas. Actually I'd been chosen to be one of the folks from the flying school that was going to be introduced to the new trainer, which was a Cessna 237, [00:01:00] which was a little jet trainer.

BARBARA: Ooh.

HOWARD: We were training in T-34s, which is a regular Beechcraft.

BARBARA: And what time, what years are we talking about here?

HOWARD: '56 to '59.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: So I went to south Texas and started flying. And actually felt very pleased that I had been chose to go to Waco to be a part of the T-37. That got delayed because they were having some trouble with the airplane and they had a couple of crashes in Sir Suit and Sir Hill, so it pushed it back. OK. I went into the infirmary one day because I wasn't feeling well and the doctor told me I had infectious mononucleosis. In those days the treatment was bed rest. Which personally is insanity, [00:02:00] but that's the way it was. So they put me to bed for six weeks. Our flying training had a table this size and four student and an instructor and (inaudible). So I go back after my six weeks of bed rest I go back to flying. It was mid to late August and we helped each other by getting the airplane stocked and moved around. So I bent down to put the chucks under a friend's who had just landed, stood up and fainted.

BARBARA: Oh.

HOWARD: Well, you might suspect that put an immediate end to my flying.

BARBARA: Sure.

HOWARD: Which was just terribly distressing. But I did reapply for flight status a year later and was granted it, [00:03:00] but with one condition, that my three-year

contract was no longer any good and it would be seven years. So I said, "Yeah, I want to fly, but I don't think I want to fly that." So elected to get out at my three years. So I worked the remaining portion of my Air Force I was at [Exon?] Air Force Base flying drones for people who do that, OK. And was from radar guided. OK. I get out and I go to work for an electronics company and I decided I'm going to go to medical school. So I applied and got into Gainesville.

BARBARA: It's hard for a Seminole to turn into a Gator. Or do you care?

HOWARD: Well, I received some abuse and remarks at times.

BARBARA: My husband went to Florida, so -- [00:04:00]

HOWARD: Did he?

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: To Gainesville?

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: When?

BARBARA: This was in the '70s. He was a counselor education in the doctoral program.

HOWARD: Well, anyway, I went to medical school. And because I had a wife and three kids and the internships after medical school were paying like \$4500, you know, this kind of thing, I thought, well, you've already got three years in

the Air Force. Why don't you do your internship in the Air Force and you make captain's pay. So I applied and got accepted at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington.

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: The first day that our group of 12 was there the hospital commander looked around and said, "Well, I want one of you guys to make a volunteer [00:05:00] for special assignment." And we were all looking around and out the window. And he said, "Well, Howard, you look like the old fart of the group, why don't you volunteer." "Sure, General, OK." We're walking down the hallway and, well, maybe you don't want to phrase it this way, but this is the way it happened.

BARBARA: That's all right.

HOWARD: And he said, "Now, Howard, Goddamn it, my name is Archie, and that's what you call me." "Sure, General Archie." "No, it's Archie." OK. The assignment -- I said, "Well, what's the special assignment?" And this was in 1965, the early days of Vietnam. He said, "Well, every Thursday night a plane that has left Da Nang went to Clark, Guam, Hawaii, Hamilton and Edwards. Every Thursday night at 10:30 it arrives [00:06:00] with 150 wounded children. That's hard.

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: So a year I triaged 7200 kids and sent them either to Bethesda or to their own home hospital. That was my special assignment. The hardest thing that I ever had to do. (inaudible)

BARBARA: I can see that. I can see that, thank you for telling me.

HOWARD: So anyhow, when my time was up I only had one year, when my time was up he told me and said, "Well, what are you going to do, Howard?" I said, "Well, Archie, I owe \$126,000. I've got to go into practice and pay off my debt." He said, "Well, I want you to know any residency, any hospital, any place in the United States you want to go in response [00:07:00] to what you did I'll arrange it." "Archie, I've got to go pay off this debt." So we did. So I went to Florida and I couldn't find a place to practice. And wound up at the University of Florida Infirmary and then they assigned me to the football team. And that was 1966 and Steve Sperrier won the Heisman that year.

BARBARA: I remember that actually.

HOWARD: OK. I tell him that he won it because we were playing Auburn and it was 28-28 and we were on the 30-yard line and there was 30 seconds. And Ray Graves said, "I think we need a field goal." And Steve ran up and said, "Coach, I can kick it." He said, "Can you?" "I need a shoe." The

kicker was injured. So I go run, grab this poor guy's shoe, [00:08:00] tie it on Steve and he kicks it and we win 31.

BARBARA: Oh, my gosh.

HOWARD: OK. So from then on half of that Heisman was mine.

And went on and went into practice in South Florida and did that for 10, 12 years. Well, let's see, that would've been '66 and we came out here in '76. So I did it for 10 years. And when Belinda and I got married we'd just get in the plane in the summer and fly around out here and see what we liked.

BARBARA: You had your plane at that point?

HOWARD: Yeah, I did. I went ahead and got my flying credentials. And I had sold my practice through my partners and was opening an emergency room hospital in Lake Worth, the Doctor's Hospital and running it. And I saw there was an opening [00:09:00] for a school in Las Vegas, and we'd been talking about getting licensed out here. And Wyoming has no reciprocity with Florida. And they insist that you be in person when you interview. So I got the appointment in Vegas and I said, "You know, let's just on a whim let's find out if they're meeting that weekend." And we drive up to Cheyenne. We did and they were. Got an appointment. A few days later I get a phone call from the

President of the Board of South Big Horn Hospital wanting to know if I'd be interested in coming out to Wyoming, they needed help. And I said, "Well, let me tell you right now, when we were leaving out from Sheridan Dakota last summer we got out over the western nose of Big Horn and I said, "Belinda, get the map out and find out where the hell we are. That's the most Godforsaken [00:10:00] looking piece of real estate I have ever seen. Where is it?" Gray Bull, Wyoming. II said, "Who in their right mind would live there?" So I said, "I don't think so." "Well, why don't we just fly you and Belinda from Cheyenne up to Billings and get you to Vegas." So, OK, left and thanks a lot, but no thanks. I forgot about it. Got my license. About three or four weeks later the same guy calls me and says, "Do you like to elk hunt?" I said, "I don't have a clue. I've never elk hunted. I do know one thing if you live in Florida it takes about 10 months to get a license." He said, "Well, you don't." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, I got one with your name on it from the Governor. Do you want to go elk hunting?" "Well, you silver tongued devil, yeah, I'll go elk hunting." Got back home, "Thanks, but no thanks." [00:11:00] A few weeks later he calls and said, "We've got an idea. Why don't we bring your entire family out over the Christmas holidays.

We'll take you into Big Horn for snowmobile and we'll ski. Let you see what this little town and let you see some of the needs." So they did. And we wound up going Basin. Bought, I guess. And I was there. We left there in '76, so that was '66 and came to Basin.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: And I continued my flying, personal flying a lot. It turns out that a quasi-government agency, which the hospital is, was eligible to purchase surplus QE helicopters from the National Guard for 500 bucks, so we did. [00:12:00]

BARBARA: Oh, my gosh.

HOWARD: Now, we're in Basin. Grable is there and Hawkins and Powers, the biggest aviation company in the state that flies helicopters, you know, and does mechanic work was right there. So we had a QE at our disposal, pilots and maintenance. So we flew that all over for years.

BARBARA: And tell me what you were doing with that, is that an emergency services?

HOWARD: Yeah.

BARBARA: OK

HOWARD: Oh, I should tell you that when I got there our emergency -- our ambulance was a red Chevrolet station



wagon. And I eventually bought it for my daughter.

Anyway, that was it.

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: One EMT in the entire county. So I set about training nine EMTs to the EMT-3 level while we were flying the QE all over.

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: I mean literally all over. [00:13:00] And kept on my personal flying. Because I at that point in time owned a Bonanza, which is a wonderful airplane, and flew a lot.

BARBARA: Now, when you were flying the helicopters around the Big Horn Basin I'm assuming that's where it was, were you then transporting patients right to Billings?

HOWARD: Oh, yeah, we'd pick them up and take them whenever they needed to go.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: But that helicopter never flew without my butt being in it. You know, and we had --

BARBARA: Were you the pilot?

HOWARD: No, no, no.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: No, we had great pilots, I mean fabulous pilots.

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: We did that for quite a while. And as I say, I had a Bonanza that we flew all over as well. OK. 1978 a cardiologist in Cheyenne put on the first advanced cardiac life support courts in the state. [00:14:00] Two doctors took it. That's Rosie. Have you met Belinda?

BARBARA: I did, I met her in (inaudible)

HOWARD: OK. I've lost my train of thought.

BARBARA: 1978 there was an emergency training.

MRS. HOWARD: How are you doing?

BARBARA: Hello, good to see you.

HOWARD: Anyway --

MRS. HOWARD: Do you want something to drink or eat?

BARBARA: I'm good, thank you.

MRS. HOWARD: What's for lunch, Howard?

BARBARA: Oh, you were saying in Cheyenne they had a training program.

HOWARD: The first course in ACLS. [Wes Hyatt?] a cardiologist in Casper and I were the only two people who took it. So they hospital had been taken over by the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital out of Denver. Hardest (inaudible) get along. [00:15:00] They said, "Well, we want you" -- first off I said, "What are you doing? I order bacon from you people for breakfast and you won't serve it." "Well, we can't do that." Come back and they say, "Well, we'd like

for you to put an ACLS for us one year." I said, "Fine, I can do it." It was a four-day course in those days. "The only thing you'll have to do is give them food on Saturday. And he wouldn't do it. So I said, "OK, I'll put the course on at (inaudible). And I did. And that was my determining point of I was getting out of there. And that was '76.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: I came from there down to here. Shortly about that time too --

BARBARA: So that was in Basin. And you left Basin and came to Thermopolis.

HOWARD: Came here. My accountant was in Basin, still is. And a few years after that they passed an act [00:16:00] saying that a business aircraft got a real advantage on tax deductions. So I read this and I call my accountant and I said, "Don, we've got to look into this." If I own it in Basin Clinic, which was the name of my professional name, I said, "I can get an immense tax write off." He said, "Howard, I've got the papers in the computer right now. All you've got to do is sign them." So that's what I did.

BARBARA: Yeah. OK, makes sense.

HOWARD: So my airplanes then began -- they're all in Basin Clinic. And, you know, I flew it all around for personal gain. But we transported people primarily in a helicopter,

but we flew personal airplanes. We do rescues out at the Big Horn, things like that. So that's my personal experience with flying in Wyoming. [00:17:00] When I moved out here I owned -- I had been intrigued by Beechcraft forever and I owned a twin engine Beech called a Travel Air and we flew all around out here. And that's what we came to Wyoming in. We get out here and I'm looking at the specs on it. And that airplane on one engine has got serving at 2700 feet. All these airports are 4,000.

BARBARA: Right.

HOWARD: You know, I got thinking, well, wait a minute, if I lose an engine I'm in a powered crash, you know, I can't fly out of it.

BARBARA: Right.

HOWARD: That's the moment I bought an S model Bonanza, which is a wonderful airplane and began to fly it. So, interesting story, when I was in Basin we got a call that a climber [00:18:00] had fallen off out Cloud Peak, died, and they were going to bring him up. And the helicopter from the National Guard had flown up there. Now, Bomber Peak is here, Cloud Peak is here and there's a saddle in here and a glacial little pond. We get up there and the real pilots aren't flying. Gene Powers, he can fly, but he's not the real helicopter pilot. And we fly over it and I look in

there and there's a plane on its side and there's red all in the water and bodies all on the side. And I thought, I said, "Jesus Christ, look at all the blood." He said, "You dummy, that's hydraulic fluid." About that time the bodies started standing up, you know. So this is 11,400 feet in August. And the [Venturi?] created by this gully is really strong when the wind is out of the west. So we're just about ready to sit down on this rock and the Venturi [00:19:00] hit and it pushes us and we started to freefall about 1800 feet towards Sheridan.

BARBARA: Oh, my.

HOWARD: Finally he got it out and got it flying. And I said, "Powers, take me home. I'm not going back up there." So we started home. And who did we run into on the Red Grade Road but the real helicopter pilot and a truck load of people. So he gets out and Dan Hawkins gets in and I've got to go back up there. You know, so a lot of those kind of stories, a lot.

BARBARA: So you worked with Ellis and Hawkins?

HOWARD: Oh, closely.

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: I took care of 90 percent of their people and they supported us like you wouldn't believe. I mean we couldn't have done it without that link.

BARBARA: Of course.

HOWARD: It gave us the opportunity to not only own it, but maintain it and to fly it.

BARBARA: Right.

HOWARD: At cost to the hospital.

BARBARA: And how long was that helicopter in service then?

HOWARD: Well, I got it [00:20:00] I think it was probably eight to nine years. Because it was still flying when I came down here.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: And then they closed Hawkins and Powers.

BARBARA: Right.

HOWARD: And it had disappeared somewhere in the (inaudible).

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: I don't know what happened to it. I understood it was in North Dakota, but I don't know.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: But when I talked to my accountant he said, you know, "Basin Clinic is going to own all of your airplanes."

BARBARA: Sure.

HOWARD: And it was a windfall.

BARBARA: Oh, sure, that makes sense. Now, when you came down here then were you associated with the hospital here?

HOWARD: Well, I'll tell you the rest of the story.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: OK. I got a guy to join me in Basin. And he wanted a building in Basin as well as the one in had in [Great Ville?] as well as the one [00:21:00] I had in Basin. So we bought, I bought a modular that we turned it into doctor's offices right across the street over there.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: OK. Five months later he's gone, he leaves, so I've got an empty office. And I tried renting it to a few people and it wasn't successful. And ultimately they called from down here and said, "We need a doctor down here. Would you consider coming?"

BARBARA: Well, he actually went to another doctor first.

HOWARD: Yeah.

BARBARA: That didn't stay. He went through --

HOWARD: Three.

BARBARA: Three?

HOWARD: Yeah. Anyway --

BARBARA: Yeah, I think.

HOWARD: Anyway, I said, "Well, under one condition that you buy my modular, put it up down here and I'll practice in it. But you own it."

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: So I retrieved my \$98,000 bill and it's still -- and  
I've practiced in it down here for 14 years.

BARBARA: And they still use it for the sleep lab.

HOWARD: Yeah, sleep lab.

BARBARA: And did you continue to fly emergency service  
assignments then too? [00:22:00]

HOWARD: From here?

BARBARA: Um-hmm.

HOWARD: In a lesser degree, but yes, a lot.

BARBARA: OK.

MRS. HOWARD: Well, you did the ER here.

HOWARD: Yeah.

BARBARA: Right.

HOWARD: You know, we began shifting using Casper and their  
services.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: And sometimes Billings.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: OK. But again, I did a lot of that individually. And  
kept training people. Kept flying.

BARBARA: Right. What kind of trips did you take in your first  
(inaudible) years ago?

HOWARD: I flew all over. I legitimately used, because there  
was a clinic airplane, many, many, many times.



BARBARA: Sure.

HOWARD: You know, but I also used it for personal flying. And like I said, when we got married we'd get in an airplane and fly west for two or three weeks, you know, those kinds of things. I was on the Governor's task force when we first came out [00:23:00] on emergency medicine. So Clark Mortimer, the mortician and I were both on a task force. So I come from Basin to here and pick him up and we did that for years. Flew in and out of Casper with people constantly.

BARBARA: Sure.

HOWARD: In fact, at one point in time we were the only helicopter service, medical helicopter service in Montana and Wyoming.

MRS. HOWARD: He probably didn't tell you, but he was chosen at that time, the community nominated him for the Robbins Physician of the Year. Partially because of all the work that he did for the EMS services and training all the EMTs in that county. One of the ladies who was a nurse at the hospital nominated him for -- they have a Physician of the Year Award that gets presented out of the [Alami?] [00:24:00] Medical Society. And he got that, he received that award while we were living in Basin. And those guys nominated him for it. He probably would not tell you that.

HOWARD: Well, we're trying to focus on aviation here as much as necessary.

MRS. HOWARD: Right. Well, that was part of the reason that the EMS services and all of the flying that he did, rescue services that he did, participated in that was part of the reason they nominated him.

BARBARA: Yeah.

MRS. HOWARD: Not just because he was, you know, taking care of patients, but because he was flying and doing all the other stuff, you know, that was part of what he felt like needed to be done in that county.

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: And did.

BARBARA: Now, when you and I were talking on the phone you mentioned that Christler?

HOWARD: Mel Christler

BARBARA: Yes.

HOWARD: Yes.

BARBARA: And you said he was really important and I should ask you about him when we got together. [00:25:00]

HOWARD: He was incredibly important. In fact, there's a hanger in Greybull dedicated with his name on it.

MRS. HOWARD: An [Pled Avery's?] husband.

HOWARD: Pled Avery's, yeah.

MRS. HOWARD: Yeah. His daughter lives here in Thermopolis.  
And he's one of the pioneers of aviation in this whole  
area.

HOWARD: He owned three Constellations. Do you know what that  
airplane is?

BARBARA: Yeah, I do. I've actually been in one in a museum.

HOWARD: Well, at one point in time the Columbine was sitting  
on the end of the runway down there.

BARBARA: Oh, my gosh.

HOWARD: So Mel was --

BARBARA: You said that was Eisenhower's plane, right?

HOWARD: Mel was instrumental in buying three of them.

MRS. HOWARD: And he had Eisenhower's airplane here.

BARBARA: Yeah, that's what he was saying, yeah.

HOWARD: I told her.

BARBARA: So who was he, was he a local guy? I'm sorry I don't  
know his name, so you'll have to explain.

HOWARD: Yes, he was a local guy, grew up around here.

[00:26:00] His son-in-law is -- is it his son-in-law?

Yeah, that's what Tim is. His son-in-law is still running  
the airport up there.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: OK. So I got to know Mel pretty well.

MRS. HOWARD: There was people that sort of started the precursor to Hawkins and Powers.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

MRS. HOWARD: Pled Avery's husband was big in aviation in Big Horn County. And they had the flight service and had sort of an aviation company up in Greybull. And Mel Christler was involved in that aviation company.

HOWARD: Big time.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: Now --

MRS. HOWARD: And when Gene Powers and Dan Hawkins started out in their firefighting service and actually starting out in crop dusting and all that stuff [00:27:00], they ended up buying -- it was Avery Air Service or something. I can't remember the name of it, but there was an Avery Air Service up there. And they ended up buying that --

HOWARD: Buying that.

MRS. HOWARD: -- company from them.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

MRS. HOWARD: And then from that sort of core beginning they began Hawkins and Powers.

HOWARD: How much Wyoming geography do you know? Do you know where Devil's Canyon is?

BARBARA: No.

HOWARD: OK, it's up out of Lowell.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: Across the river and you go up and it's up in there.

And across the river for Devil's Canyon on the other side is the Crow Reservation. And they used to fly uranium out on a dirt airstrip and bring it over. And Mel was instrumental in getting that underway. And he was flying 346s out of a dirt airstrip on an Indian reservation.

[00:28:00]

BARBARA: Oh, my gosh.

HOWARD: So that's the kind of innovative person he was.

Delightful man. Delightful man.

MRS. HOWARD: And he ended up spending his later days in Cody involved in an aviation company over there.

BARBARA: Oh, OK. So you came to Thermopolis and then you practiced here did you say for -- or are you still practicing?

HOWARD: I'm limited in practice right now. I'm a county (inaudible) officer. I used to go to various set of places to work. I worked in Riverton three days a week for a while. Worked up and started going back to Basin at the clinic there. Until I had some medical problems here recently I was doing that once a week. And intend to hopefully do that again. [00:29:00]

BARBARA: And you're still flying?

HOWARD: No. I was. But at one point in time I had -- well, I've had two, four vessel coronary bypasses and 15 stints. And I am a senior aviation medical examiner. So I knew that the FAA wasn't going to give me a license. I got it back, but they made me do so many things to keep it once a year. It's costing me about 3 or \$4,000 just to -- and I already sold all my airplanes when I lost my --

BARBARA: Oh, yeah.

HOWARD: I didn't have anything to fly. And I'd get it back and, yeah, I had a ticket, but you know, was it worth it to spend \$4,000 to fly 10 hours?

BARBARA: Yeah. [00:30:00]

HOWARD: And that's when I discovered light sport. Are you familiar with that?

BARBARA: I'm familiar with the term.

HOWARD: What it means is that aircraft that weigh less than a given amount of weight can go a certain way, can be flown by people that do not possess an aviation designation except light sport. And you can fly on your driver's license. As long as you can get a driver's license you can fly light sport. So we started talking about how foolish it was to spend 3 or \$4,000 a year not having --

MRS. HOWARD: And also as long as you haven't given up your --  
as long as you haven't failed your medical. He passed his  
last medical that he took he had passed.

HOWARD: Yeah.

MRS. HOWARD: But you can't have failed the medical.

BARBARA: Right.

HOWARD: But, you know, I regained my medical, which made me  
eligible [00:31:00] then for light sport.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: So Belinda and I started looking and we looked in  
Florida, we looked in Tennessee, we looked several places  
for a light sport airplane. Well, most light sports have  
room for two people and nothing else. You may have a  
little sling to put a purse in or something. But there's  
an airplane made in Australian called a Jabiru, which means  
stork, which started light as a four-seat trainer. OK. It  
had a bench back seat, three doors and the two front doors.  
And it had incredible performance. It could fly 15,000  
feet, go 140 miles an hour, burn five gallons of gas. You  
know, it was just unreal what this airplane was able to do.  
They equipped it with Grand Rapids cockpits that looked  
like an airline cockpit. I mean everything was in it.  
[00:33:00] So we flew several light sports. And went to  
Shelbyville, Tennessee and we flew that one and got that

pulled up and we decided that if it became available we would buy one. Well, about that time they were demonstrating this airplane in Massachusetts. And a check pilot was letting us fly and about 10 feet above the runway he said, "You take it." And, bam, they tore up the landing gear. So I had an opportunity to get it repaired and had an opportunity to get a great deal off the cost. And the airplane is perfectly fine.

BARBARA: Oh.

HOWARD: And that's the one I bought.

BARBARA: OK. Now, were you able to --

HOWARD: Still have it.

BARBARA: Were you able to fly it back here?

HOWARD: Oh, yeah.

BARBARA: Oh.

HOWARD: Oh, yeah, we flew all over in it, for years we flew.

[00:33:00] And I flew as much in that as I did in my

Bonanza. Because, again, it was owned by Basin Clinic.

BARBARA: So you had them at the same time.

HOWARD: No. I had given up the Beechcraft.

BARBARA: Oh, OK. Yeah.

HOWARD: So I wound up with the Jabiru.

BARBARA: OK. What a great name.



HOWARD: Yeah, isn't it? And so I am in the process of advertising right now, but I'm not really sure. And it all would depend on this lady here. People want to buy it, but they want you to give it to them.

BARBARA: Yeah, they don't want to pay for it.

HOWARD: They don't want to pay what it's worth and they want to come fly it first. Well, my insurance is on me.

BARBARA: Exactly.

HOWARD: So they get a little testy about it. So, as a matter of fact I put an annual on it yesterday. Every year you have to have an annual exam. So I put my annual, so it's good for another year. And as we were discussing yesterday [00:34:00] maybe Belinda wants to start flying again. She has 50 hours. She was flying in Florida and was taking her last solo cross country --

MRS. HOWARD: Then I got pregnant with her daddy.

HOWARD: -- on Friday and --

MRS. HOWARD: I passed everything though.

HOWARD: Yeah, she was ready, had taken her, you know, course.

MRS. HOWARD: Written exam.

HOWARD: Yeah. And was (inaudible).

BARBARA: Oh.

MRS. HOWARD: I was pregnant.

HOWARD: Well, it turned out she was pregnant.

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: OK. So she got 50 --

MRS. HOWARD: I never found it again either, by the way.

HOWARD: Well, she had 50 hours of flying and, you know --

MRS. HOWARD: And then we moved out here when he was six months old. Greg was six weeks when we lived in Miami. And I was so busy with babies and kids.

BARBARA: Of course.

MRS. HOWARD: And I just, you know, I had no interest in flying when my kids were little at all. I kept having, you know, I had the feeling, well, what's going to happen to these kids, because I was nursing, you know, [00:35:00] if mama falls out of the sky?

BARBARA: Sure.

MRS. HOWARD: Plus I had an absolutely horrible sense of direction. I still do.

BARBARA: That's what compasses are for, right.

HOWARD: So we are in the process of talking to the insurance folks and talking to the insurance for here.

MRS. HOWARD: I called them by the way.

HOWARD: Was I right?

MRS. HOWARD: What?

HOWARD: Just me and --

MRS. HOWARD: You're the only one insured. But they might --  
you have to call them. They have to get the information on  
the --

HOWARD: On the one I want to insure.

MRS. HOWARD: On who you want.

HOWARD: And it's got to include a certain number of hours in  
flight.

MRS. HOWARD: Right. Well, the insurance company may or may  
not charge you any extra. It depends on who's going to be  
flying it.

HOWARD: Well, the upshot of this thing is with me trying to  
sell this airplane, because I'm not flying, it may end up  
that Belinda's going to go in and get her ticket.

MRS. HOWARD: If I do that you can fly around with me and get  
me from place to place.

HOWARD: Yeah.

BARBARA: Point you in the right direction, right. [00:36:00]

MRS. HOWARD: It would definitely be very BFR. One time I was  
taking in my airplane (inaudible) West Palm Beach was the  
airport that I was flying out of. And he had a Beech  
Bonanza at the time. So he and my daughter would get up in  
the Bonanza and fly around, you know. I'd used to going  
just practicing going around the point and stuff like that.  
So I'm in a Cessna 150. So I take off in my Cessna 150.

And this is Palm Beach International Airport. Of course it was, you know, 1973 or '74. Anyway, I get to the end of the runway and there's one cloud sitting at the end of the runway. And so I get on the radio and say, "I'm coming back for a landing, there's a cloud at the end of the runway." And everybody just laughed at me.

BARBARA: Oh, that's funny. [00:27:00]

HOWARD: So that's the general idea of my aviation participation in Wyoming.

BARBARA: OK. Now, I'm going to go back and fill in a little bit. You said your aviation experience started in the ROTC.

HOWARD: Um-hmm.

BARBARA: So were you interested in flying before then, is that why you chose --

HOWARD: That's why I chose the Air Force.

BARBARA: OK. All right.

HOWARD: ROTC.

BARBARA: OK. And so tell me about that very early, earlier than actual experience you're interested in. How did that happen?

HOWARD: Well, a combination of curiosity dealing with the unknown and having this fanciful idea that, you know,

flying was going to be something challenging. It wasn't grounded in hard exposure at all.

BARBARA: Oh, OK, it was just an idea.

HOWARD: Not a bit.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: I did not fly at all [00:38:00] prior to the Air Force.

BARBARA: Oh, OK. All right. But obviously --

HOWARD: But my father was a circuit riding Methodist preacher. We didn't have any money for flying.

BARBARA: Oh, well, of course. Of course. So what is that you like about it?

HOWARD: Say it again.

BARBARA: What is it that you like about flying?

HOWARD: Well, I like many, many things. I get personal satisfaction out of flying. I mean there's a gut personal satisfaction out of flying. And, well, I'll tell it like this, I'll make the statement that when I started flying I was not going to be a doctor in a Bonanza. You know what I mean by that? The doctor/Bonanza, you know.

BARBARA: Oh, I do know exactly.

HOWARD: Historically they didn't.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: More airplane than their ego allows them to fly.

BARBARA: I see.

HOWARD: And they think they can [00:29:00] and they can't.

MRS. HOWARD: They can afford a bigger airplane than they have  
knowledge to --

BARBARA: I get it.

MRS. HOWARD: The capability to fly.

HOWARD: So I said, "Well, I'm not going to be a doctor in a  
Bonanza.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: So I took the course, I got my ticket, then I took my  
commercial license. Then I took my multi-engine license.  
And then I took the instructor's course.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: So that I would be as fully trained as possible to  
prevent this doctor in a Bonanza. You know, and if you go  
back in history you will see that they're verified that,  
you know, doctors buy Bonanza's because they can afford it,  
but they don't know how to fly them.

BARBARA: That's very interesting. I hadn't heard that before.  
Very interesting.

HOWARD: Well, it's replete in the literature.

MRS. HOWARD: Did you tell her about the airplane that you  
bought with the judge and the instructor from Hawkins and  
Powers?

HOWARD: Not yet.

MRS. HOWARD: With your guys' little plane club you had up in Basin. [00:40:00]

HOWARD: Well, in Basin Judge Hartman, Gary Hartman. What do you know about Cheyenne, anything?

BARBARA: I know the name Gary Hartman for some reason.

MRS. HOWARD: He's a judge, he's a district judge.

HOWARD: Well, he's been in the Governor's office, you know.

MRS. HOWARD: He's in charge of the juvenile -- he was appointed by (inaudible) to work with the juveniles and try to restructure the way we are treating juveniles in the court system.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: Anyway, the instructor up there -- and Gary and I we're good friends. So when we got into the S model Bonanza, which is the real whiz bang, it's got a bigger engine, it's got a bigger cockpit, we bought it together, had a three-person flying club.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

MRS. HOWARD: And Randy was the chief pilot for Hawkins and Powers.

HOWARD: Right.

MRS. HOWARD: And Gary was actually not too far off from having [00:41:00] learned how to fly.

HOWARD: No.

MRS. HOWARD: He had gotten his license probably about a year or two before you guys went in together on this airplane.

HOWARD: And then he went ahead and completed it.

MRS. HOWARD: And the problem, you know, the big problem was Howard just didn't have the time to fly that much. And so it was -- buying an airplane was probably not the most practical thing. But with two other people in it, you know, sharing expenses, you know, it made it a lot more practical.

BARBARA: Right.

HOWARD: And there was the safety aspect. Most of the time Gary and I would be flying with an instructor, who happened to be a friend.

BARBARA: Right. So you were flying together rather than each one took the plane out by --

HOWARD: Well, we all lived up there.

BARBARA: OK.

HOWARD: They lived in Greybull and I lived in Basin, so --

BARBARA: OK.

MRS. HOWARD: You didn't always fly together. We took it on trips together.

HOWARD: Oh, yeah.



MRS. HOWARD: And Gary took his family on trips and Randy took his family on trips. But it was, you know --

HOWARD: We had a close association.

BARBARA: How long did that partnership last?

HOWARD: I don't know, probably six years.

MRS. HOWARD: We still had the airplane when we moved down --

HOWARD: When we came down here.

MRS. HOWARD: -- here. [00:42:00] And those guys, well, Randy moved away, so we bought him out. And then Gary became a district judge and he was less interested in flying, so we bought him out. So we ended up owning the whole airplane after we moved to Thermopolis.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: She says what kind of trips? We loved going to Denver to the opera.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: Central City, you know, I mean we made many, many, many trips like that. They weren't all medical trips .

BARBARA: Right.

MRS. HOWARD: Yeah. He used to take me to Billings to go shopping and stuff like that.

BARBARA: That's cool.

MRS. HOWARD: When the kids were little.

HOWARD: Matter of fact I'll have to tell you a really cute quick story. We were coming out of Denver. And if you've ever been at the old airport in Denver it's crowded, because there's not much space. So we get in this line of airliners.

MRS. HOWARD: This is at Stapleton.

HOWARD: At the Ridge in Stapleton.

BARBARA: Yeah. [00:43:00]

HOWARD: So we get up, we get to a point where we're getting ready to be told to go get in position and hold. And we've got six airliners ahead of me and six of them, you know, oh, God, we've got to wait. So the tower says, "Get in position and hold. Caution, wait, turbulence." So that's too many cautions, you've got to sit. So we finally get cleared and he says, "United 614, position hold, caution, prop wise."

(laughter)

BARBARA: Oh, gosh.

HOWARD: You know, we got a great deal of years of enjoyment out of flying.

MRS. HOWARD: When we lived in Florida we used to fly to the Bahamas, you know, that kind of stuff. He was trying to impress me when we were dating. (inaudible) [00:44:00]

HOWARD: In Philadelphia.

BARBARA: Yeah.

MRS. HOWARD: Well, Chalet Suzanne, which is a really fancy  
little restaurant in the middle of Florida.

BARBARA: I've been there.

HOWARD: Have you, Chalet Suzanne?

BARBARA: Um-hmm. My husband and I lived in Vero Beach for a  
while.

MRS. HOWARD: Oh, really?

BARBARA: And we were driving around the countryside one day and  
saw the billboard and went and discovered it.

HOWARD: Isn't it wonderful?

BARBARA: It's such a cool place.

MRS. HOWARD: It is so cool.

HOWARD: We made many, many trips to Chalet Suzanne.

MRS. HOWARD: We also used to fly over to the little fishing  
camps, you know, on the other side of the coast. We'd go  
over there and Saturday and, you know --

HOWARD: Chokoloskee and places like that.

MRS. HOWARD: Chololoskee and, you know, go fishing and all  
that kind of stuff.

UNIDENTIFIED CHILD: And sometimes crabs -- we were getting  
lobsters out of the ocean.

MRS. HOWARD: Yeah.

HOWARD: A lot of times.

MRS. HOWARD: Did lobstering down in the Keys all the time.

BARBARA: Yeah.

MRS. HOWARD: When it opened. It opens on our eldest son's birthday. His birthday is August 6th. And so the opening day in the Keys is August 6th. [00:45:00] Or at least it used to be, I don't know if it still is. But he always wanted to spend his birthday down in the Keys for the opening day of Lobster season.

BARBARA: Yeah.

MRS. HOWARD: And we still have family that live down there.

BARBARA: Oh, do you? OK.

MRS. HOWARD: Howard was raised in Homestead.

HOWARD: We fly in and out of there a lot.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

MRS. HOWARD: He graduated from Homestead High.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

MRS. HOWARD: There is five of them left now. They had their last class reunion this year. And there's five of them left, including Howard.

BARBARA: Yeah, I've been through Homestead.

MRS. HOWARD: His brother-in-law was a big tomato farmer.

BARBARA: Oh, OK, that makes sense.

MRS. HOWARD: Big tomato farmer.

HOWARD: The biggest tomato farmer.

MRS. HOWARD: Yeah.

BARBARA: That makes sense.

MRS. HOWARD: Yeah, very big. They're mostly scattered the kids. And in fact, as a matter of fact one of his sons has moved to Kyle and he's raising lamas. No, alpacas.

[00:46:00]

HOWARD: Alpacas.

MRS. HOWARD: And he's got the alpaca ranch over there. Whatever you call raising alpaca.

BARBARA: I have no idea.

MRS. HOWARD: Do you call it a ranch or --

BARBARA: A garden or something, I don't know.

MRS. HOWARD: Pack of alpaca, I don't know.

BARBARA: I don't know.

MRS. HOWARD: A pack of alpacas.

BARBARA: I don't know. Well, I know you've got a rehab appointment to keep, so I'll let you go. I'm so glad to finally meet you after all those conversations on the phone. And, of course, I have paperwork.

HOWARD: Well, my other part of my flying, which has been done 12 years with the University, which made it very, very helpful. I was on the Board of Trustees for 12 years and we had our own airplane.

BARBARA: Right.

HOWARD: The University did.

BARBARA: Right.

HOWARD: So whenever went to Laramie we'd go to (inaudible) and then they'd pick us up. So I miss that.

BARBARA: I'll bet [00:47:00] You weren't doing the flying though, right?

MRS. HOWARD: No, no, no.

HOWARD: No.

BARBARA: You were a passenger.

HOWARD: No.

MRS. HOWARD: He was critiquing the pilot.

BARBARA: Well, at least he was getting to fly.

HOWARD: Well, they knew I was watching them.

(laughter)

BARBARA: I'll bet they did.

HOWARD: Well, they were all good guys.

BARBARA: Yeah.

MRS. HOWARD: Well, Ms. Rose, are you done with your popcorn yet?

HOWARD: I hope this is the kind of stuff you wanted.

BARBARA: This is perfect, thank you.

HOWARD: What are you going to do with it?

BARBARA: Well, this goes to the Wyoming State Archives. I'm just a contract person doing the work.

MRS. HOWARD: Oh, you're not just a -- you are a contractor.

Not just a, you are a contract person doing the work for the archives.

BARBARA: Right. But it is not my project is what I was getting at.

MRS. HOWARD: Oh, OK.

BARBARA: So the information will go to the State Archives where it will be available for researchers. I think I mentioned to you that it was part of the [Kirk Kaiser?] Foundation had given the state archives money to preserve the [00:48:00] history of aviation in Wyoming. So this is part of that project.

HOWARD: Well, then you need to hear a little bit about our medical education at the University of Wyoming. Because when we came to Wyoming we had three places that our kids could go to medical school, Utah, Colorado, (inaudible). And they had a pretty bad program, but it was really a crummy program. So over the years I got to know the people in Seattle very well. And one of the professors from Seattle came out and lectured the medical society about [WAMA?]. Because our legislature had turned down an effort to join WAMA in the late '70s, mid-'70s. So he came and gave this talk and we all clapped politely. And I said, "Wait a minute. John didn't come out here to give us a

pretty speech. You know, he came out here to find out to we want to join WAMA? [00:49:00] So, with that said --

MRS. HOWARD: Bye.

HOWARD: Bye.

MRS. HOWARD: Nice meeting you again.

BARBARA: Good to see you again, thank you.

MRS. HOWARD: Are you going up to the (inaudible) this weekend at all or you're all down in Lander?

BARBARA: I'm down in Lander.

MRS. HOWARD: OK. Well, have a good week. It was nice to see you again.

BARBARA: Thank you, you too.

MRS. HOWARD: You ought to (inaudible) with Tim and Sylvia. Because they --

HOWARD: Well, we've been talking about.

MRS. HOWARD: Yeah, she really needs to talk to them. OK, bye.

HOWARD: So as typical the loud mouth in the back of the room gets, you know, well, why don't you see what's going on, Howard." So I traveled the state for a year and we wound up with one descanting vote of a legislature and we got WAMA. And it was the best thing that ever happened to our medical (inaudible).

BARBARA: Yeah.



HOWARD: I am going to miss those kinds of connections at the University.

BARBARA: Oh, sure. [00:50:00]

HOWARD: But I'm staying on their Advisory Committee.

BARBARA: Oh, good.

HOWARD: I just, you know, when you get that attached to something it's hard to get loose.

BARBARA: I understand.

HOWARD: So, anyway, we've never for a nanosecond getting out here.

BARBARA: Good. I know when I got here it felt like the first place I'd ever felt at home when I moved to Wyoming in '91. I visited for the first time in 1990 and just fell in love with it.

HOWARD: Where did you live?

BARBARA: In Rock Springs to start with. And I loved Rock Springs, I really did. I had friends at the college there. And then moved to Cheyenne and to Evanston and lived in Evanston for 13 years.

HOWARD: Where?

BARBARA: Evanston

HOWARD: Evanston?

BARBARA: Yeah. [00:51:00]

HOWARD: Do you know the plastic surgeon in Rock Springs, Tom?

I'll give you his name here in a minute.

BARBARA: OK. I was only there for a couple of years.

HOWARD: Well, you've been there. They own the Pepsi business down there.

BARBARA: Oh, oaky.

HOWARD: He was on the Board of Trustees when I got on.

BARBARA: Oh, OK.

HOWARD: Tom, not Buchanan. Tom -- Christ, I can't --

BARBARA: Well, apparently I don't.

HOWARD: When I got on the board there were three physicians on the Board, Tom and Tyler Haines and me. Now there are none. Which I think Matt made a mistake in not doing it. I tried my best getting him to put Diane [Noten?] on it. Do you know her?

BARBARA: I don't.

HOWARD: Diane [00:52:00] held together for 11 years by herself Saratoga. Wonderful lady.

BARBARA: Yeah.

HOWARD: She lives in Meeteetse now and practices in the emergency room.

BARBARA: Yeah. Well, I can see why it would be useful to have a whole spectrum of background on the trustees. I think it's way too easy to (inaudible).

HOWARD: Well, we don't have anybody. You know, we got a huge health sciences department and nobody on the Board with any real knowledge.

BARBARA: Yeah. Well, it looks like they're going a different direction anyways.

HOWARD: Well, I don't like the direction, I guess.

BARBARA: Well, there are a lot of people who don't like the direction. So you're not alone.

HOWARD: Well, let me just tell you that --

BARBARA: I'll shut this.

END OF AUDIO FILE