

**Interviewee:** Strozier, Anne, Ph.D.  
Strozier, Robert  
**Interviewer:** Robin Sellers  
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**Sellers:** Anne, tell me a little bit about your life before you moved here and then what the move meant to you.

**ASTrozier:** Okay. We lived in Chicago in an apartment [movement of microphone covers words]. Lots of snow and ice. I went to a small school, and we just had a lovely life, but it was a very modest accommodations, to say the least.

**Sellers:** How old were you?

**ASTrozier:** I was ten.

**Sellers:** How did you learn that you were going to be moving?

**ASTrozier:** We were sitting on the front porch of our little apartment and Dad told me. I was flabbergasted; I think all of us were so shocked because it was so different from anything that we expected or dreamed of.

**Sellers:** You had no idea that interviews were going on or anything?

**ASTrozier:** No. I'm the youngest, so I'm pretty sure I learned last. So I knew nothing [laughs]. But I was excited. I had some ambivalence, but I thought it was pretty darn exciting.

**BStrozier:** What year were you in?

**ASTrozier:** I'd just finished fourth grade.

**Sellers:** So what happened then? How much preparation was made and —?

**ASTrozier:** I don't remember that part. I remember the drive down there a little bit.

**Sellers:** And the drive was for the move itself, not before?

**ASTrozier:** Yes. My other brother and I, Chuck and I and our parents drove down and just arrived. I don't know – Mother probably had been down before. I know Dad had, but we

definitely hadn't seen it before.

**Sellers:** Did your mother tell you anything about it that made you feel better or worried you?

**ASTrozier:** Well, she said it was a big house and sixteen acres and it just was very hard to get my mind around that. I couldn't imagine what that was like. I had no idea.

**Sellers:** What did you do when you got here?

**ASTrozier:** Well, I was thrilled, overwhelmed, and I really felt like I was in a fairy tale, because it was such a big house. Just the long driveway. My brother and I, I remember us just running around the house trying to find all the rooms. I think the first thing we discovered was that there were two staircases that met halfway up, and that that was really fun for scaring each other [laughter] or just sneaking around and playing hide and seek. So we just were "gobsmacked," as my English friend would say. We were just amazed and thrilled. It just seemed like a castle or a beautiful home to live in. Couldn't believe we were going to live there.

**Sellers:** Did you bring your furniture?

**ASTrozier:** No, we didn't. I mean, I'm sure we brought a few pieces, but I remember I got a bedroom upstairs across from my parents and I was given this four-poster bed that came from the Governor's Mansion. They weren't using it, but they offered it to us. So it was a huge four-poster bed that had a little staircase you had to use to get up on it. So that was pretty glamorous, too. Sort of every little girl's dream, I think. That was very exciting.

And I think the boys – [to Bob Strozier] maybe you had some of our furniture. But Mother and Dad, I think, had a bed also from the Governor's mansion.

**Sellers:** The Governor's mansion had been demolished at the time and they were building a new one, so a lot of that furniture was farmed out to various homes in the area.

**ASTrozier:** Well, we got furniture that was farmed out, too. We were impressed.

**Sellers:** Where did you go to school?

**ASTrozier:** I went to Florida High, the demonstration school. Another thing that was very different for us was having servants in the mansion. We certainly had some ambivalence about that. It just seemed very odd, and was that the right thing to do?

**Sellers:** You mean, having servants?

**ASTrozier:** Yes. So we had a cook named Esther, who actually Bob and I took to dinner last night. She's really wonderful; she was the cook for several presidents after our father. Her

father-in-law, Alex, who helped around the house. And then Alonso was in the yard, helping with the yard. But Alex would take me to the demonstration school, Florida High, and then he took Chuck up to Leon High. But then I walked home from school, I remember, because it's plenty close enough, which I liked doing. I don't remember how Chuck got home.

**Sellers:** Did you ever have friends from school over to the house?

**ASTrozier:** I did, definitely. Actually one of them I saw the other night, and she was saying that she came to the president's house to pick me up to go to a movie one day (we probably were twelve) and there was some event going on. She was just overwhelmed with all these people. She said, "I just want my friend, Anne." She just didn't quite know how to handle it. But I had a couple of really good friends that I had over a lot, and one of them, we played croquet a lot on the lawn. So they got used to it and they loved visiting it, too.

**Sellers:** Did your folks interact with your friends at any point?

**ASTrozier:** Yes, absolutely.

**Sellers:** It was more like just a normal family.

**ASTrozier:** Yes, absolutely.

**Sellers:** Your father went off to the office, so to speak, every morning. What did your mom do?

**ASTrozier:** Well, my memory of what she did was to organize everybody – Mother is a very good organizer – and get all events have to be done. Then she'd take a bath and then she'd go do social things or cooking — I guess she didn't cook.

**Sellers:** She didn't have to.

**ASTrozier:** Right, and she was very happy about that; she didn't like to cook. Lots of social things, though. My dad had been Dean of Students at the University of Chicago, so they'd have some social obligations. And I always had friends. Busy lives, but this was a huge step up. There were many, many more nights that they'd have parties.

**Sellers:** Were you ever included in any of those or allowed to stay downstairs for them?

**ASTrozier:** Sometimes, yes. I don't remember being shunned away. For the most part, I was fine if I made an appearance unless it was something real serious, but I don't remember wanting to be there and not being included.

**Sellers:** If you were not included, if you were upstairs, were you reading or hanging over

the balconies or —?

**ASTrozier:** I was reading or my brother Chuck and I would sometimes play together upstairs. He was very nice and played jacks with me; that was a lot of fun. Also there was the Florida room on the first floor. If they were having a dinner party, we could be in the Florida room and watch TV or play or something like that. So that was all right.

**Sellers:** Do you remember any funny instances that occurred?

**ASTrozier:** I remember when Chuck (which I think Mother has written up at one point) – Chuck was going through the teenage years, so he had his rebellious times. One time I guess they were having people over for dinner, and we were supposed to be there. Chuck didn't look dressed up enough, and so Mother told Chuck to go put on some nice clothes. So he came back, and I think he had on blue jeans and a white tuxedo jacket (that was a little rebellion). And I don't know if it was the same time or another time, but he sat – the company had either arrived or about to – he just took a milk jug in the living room and just started drinking it like this [indicates lifting the jug to his mouth] and she was horrified. So he was chaffing at the limits of being the president's son a little bit.

**Sellers:** Did you ever get any attention that was uncomfortable for you because you were the president's daughter?

**ASTrozier:** Yes. I remember going to fifth grade at Florida High and the teacher, Dr. DeWitt, who was very nice – I walked in and she said, "Now everybody, here's the president's daughter." I was like, "Yuck!" So that was hard. And there were some other times. After we got to know each other, my friends and I, it wasn't as big a deal. But as I was telling my friends the other night, I remember the day my father died, April 20. There was a girl in our class who was very poor, and her father died the same day. I just remember I got all this attention and she didn't. It was just so sad, and it just really brought home to me how unfair it was.

**Sellers:** What do you remember (if it's not stirring up memories that will bother you) about your father's trip and learning that he had died? How did your mom react and what did you all do?

**ASTrozier:** Well, she told us Dad had had a heart attack. I actually thought she meant her dad, because he lived with us. But we went to school and she tried to go to Atlanta to go to Chicago to be with him. But she didn't make it, because by the time she got to Atlanta, she knew he had died. So Alex came and picked me up at school and picked Chuck up, but Mary Call Collins was there to greet us and was very kind and hugged us. I don't remember who else was there, but I just remember she was there, was very kind. So they told us and we just waited for Mother to come home. Bob was there. [to Bob] Were you there? I don't think you were there when I got home.

Of course, we didn't quite know what to do. But Mother said, "We're going to be fine,"

and all that. For her, it was very hard figuring out what do to, where to move, because we had to leave Tallahassee. Well, we didn't have to, but we thought we should. But a lot of friends came and celebrated him and laughed and cried and all that.

**Sellers:** So all in all, do you have happy memories?

**ASTrozier:** Oh, yes. Extremely happy. It was a really unique part of my life, because then we moved back to Chicago into a little apartment then. So it's almost like a dream. Mother has said that, too, because it was so different from the rest of our lives.

**Sellers:** Fairly brief.

**ASTrozier:** Fairly brief – three years. But I did some different things. One of my very good friends and I would play in the ditch and ride our bikes and play outside. I had a lot more freedom to play outside and be a tomboy-type person than in Chicago, because in Chicago, Mother was always afraid of me being out in the street. It was not a safe environment. So it was wonderful. I remember the scuppernong garden – we just thought that was so cool!

**Sellers:** Did you eat them?

**ASTrozier:** We did. And Esther, the cook, would make scuppernong jelly. And then we had a rose garden, and that was amazing. And I guess Dad or somebody had put in three putting holes, and that was really fun. Yes, I thought it was wonderful. It was really incredible.

**Sellers:** Do you remember any changes that your mother made inside, to the decor?

**ASTrozier:** Yes, I do. I remember her thinking it was not — she must have come down before we were there, because it was all in process. I think she thought it was very dark and with heavy, ornate furnishings and light fixtures. So she opened it up and she put down this light green rug throughout that was a very pretty color. And the Madonna matched – it was sort of based on the Madonna color. And I think she tried to have a little less furniture and a little more contemporary. So those are the main things I remember her doing.

**Sellers:** Did she seem to be happy in the house?

**ASTrozier:** Yes, I think so. I think she was happy. She was certainly busy, and didn't get to see Dad as much as she had, but I think she was very happy. We always describe Mother as a "lady." Mother was raised as a lady, and so I think she fit the role very well. But she also had a very good sense of humor. Both of my parents did. So they could laugh at the funny things, too. But I think she enjoyed it, [to Bob] don't you? You know, it was just such a huge loss when it came to an end so early.

**Sellers:** Okay. If you think of anything to add while I'm talking with Bob, just jump in.

[movement of microphone covers words] You said you didn't come down right away.

**BStrozier:** Yes. I was in high school; I just graduated when they moved to Florida, so I spent the year in India with a friend of mine named Geoff Ward, working for the Ford Foundation – no, not at that point, that was later. Anyway, we spent the year in India. So I arrived from India to Tallahassee. We had grown up as – Dad was an academic, poor academic, living in a little tiny apartment in Chicago. We had enough money to live on, happily, but —. So for me it was very dramatic to come back after a year. And I, of course, had heard about the house and the family and this new life.

**Sellers:** India is poor.

**BStrozier:** Well, we didn't live poor. We lived well. But we saw the poverty. So as Anne said, it was like a fairyland in a way. Here's this big house with big white columns and a huge yard and a golf course and arbors and servants even. And Dad was driven to work every day in a Buick by Alex. So it was very striking to see how the family — Chuck had grown into a teenager, and there was a whole different rhythm, and it took me a while. So I spent that first summer with my friend Geoff in the house. Then we went off to college the next year. So I would come back at Christmas, basically, and the next summer. So I didn't have nearly the sense of growing up there. And I felt in a funny way a little bit like an outsider. I remember my perception of Mother's – as her role in the house – was that she had become, as Anne said, very much the sort of organizer-caretaker. She's a very organized woman, and she really kind of seemed to relish that role. She was very much running the show, and she was, I would say, not exactly distracted, but very absorbed by this. She had been a housewife; she did volunteer work. And she was suddenly thrust into a managerial role.

**Sellers:** She was the first lady.

**AStrozier:** That's right.

**BStrozier:** The first lady. And since I'm talking about her – I later went to California, and I decided to come back to Tallahassee. I was out there writing, and I decided to come back to Tallahassee, and that weekend was the weekend Dad died. I'd been away for six months. So I came back. But I remember after Dad died, Mother – such a sense of helplessness initially. She was 49, she'd been thrust into this magical role for these three fairyland like years, and she had three kids to raise. Then we had to go back to a small apartment in a dirty city. So that was, I think, a very, very difficult period of adjustment for the whole family, but particularly for her. She had to get a job, which she did. She became the Dean of Students —

**AStrozier:** She hadn't worked since Bob had been born – outside the house. So it was big. She did great, as it turns out.

**BStrozier:** But I think in a funny way that her role as first lady helped to prepare her, gave

her confidence to take on a responsible academic job, because she was running things.

**AStrozier:** That's true.

**Sellers:** When you were here in the summertime with Geoff, what did you do?

**BStrozier:** We had jobs during the day.

**Sellers:** Were they self-imposed jobs or did were they outside the home income-making jobs?

**BStrozier:** They were income-making, very, very boring jobs that Dad got us – painting furniture and things like that. And we went to sort of parties of other high school friends, but we were always a little outside, of course. I think that was the feeling I had very much there, that there was sort of another world I entered.

**Sellers:** And you were sort of temporarily there.

**BStrozier:** Yes, right. But I loved it. It was great fun being there. And we had such fun seeing Esther last night, for instance, and just having the cook and being part of this fairyland.

**Sellers:** You said you came home at Christmas time. What do either of you remember about Christmases in the house?

**BStrozier:** In the house.

**AStrozier:** I remember a big tree, but I don't remember anything particular. There were carolers who would come, but —

**BStrozier:** Yes, I remember one of the times I was struck about Mother's role for some reason was when I was there for Christmas and a sorority came by and caroled. We were upstairs and Mother said, "Oh, I've got to go downstairs and greet the carolers." And she had some cookies and —

**AStrozier:** Invite them in.

**BStrozier:** And we went out the front and [movement of microphone covers words] girls. So many roles that you have to play as first lady, of course. Social and that kind of thing. And going back to what I said earlier, I think the role as first lady kind of broadened and deepened her skills as a social dean, don't you?

**AStrozier:** My brothers and I disagree a little bit on our Mother, but that's okay. Because I think she had —

**Sellers:** Want that disagreement to go on tape?

**AStrozier:** Noooo. I mean, she was president of the YMCA when she was a kid and stuff. I just think Mother was always a leader and an organizer, so I think —

**Sellers:** She just sort of sublimated it.

**AStrozier:** Yes, yes. But in any case, it was a wonderful —

**BStrozier:** Yes. I think it gave her added skills.

**Sellers:** Were you at all a part of the packing up and moving on? Did you stay for a while?

**BStrozier:** Oh, yes. [movement of microphone covers words] went back to the University of Chicago and we lived together. So we went from this fairyland to a little tiny apartment. It was a very hard adjustment, yes.

**Sellers:** What else might you remember or want to talk about that I haven't asked?

**AStrozier:** [movement of microphone covers words] — that the house at Apalachicola was built while we were there. So that was a —

**Sellers:** That was a private residence?

**AStrozier:** Right. That was fabulous. That was so much fun. We really enjoyed that immensely, going down there and just getting away and swimming and fishing. So that was great fun. We just loved that. We'd take friends down. So that was just another really different and really exciting —

**Sellers:** Did your folks go down there together or did your mom take you?

**AStrozier:** No. I remember Dad always being there.

**Sellers:** Do you remember about how often you were able to get down there?

**AStrozier:** I don't remember when it was built. I mean, we didn't have it when we first moved in. I don't know, once a month or something like that. Probably not that often. More in the summertime, probably. We wouldn't stay for a real long time.

**Sellers:** And back then the president could leave things for a few days at a time.

**AStrozier:** Yes, that's true. I don't remember ever being there without him. And the other

thing is Pogo, our dog. Pogo, we brought from Chicago, and he was a mutt and when we lived in an apartment we walked him four times a day. He loved being in the president's house and everybody was very accepting of him. He got to the point where we just let him go at night. I mean, he would just roam the streets, and he had a great life. We didn't know what Pogo did [laughs]. But when Dad died, we had to decide what to do, and we realized it would be cruel to Pogo to take him back to an apartment and pen him in. So Esther, the cook, offered to take him. We've talked to her about him in the past, and she was talking about him last night. She loved Pogo. She said she never had a dog like Pogo after that. And my mother tells the story of coming down here when they dedicated the library to Dad six months after we had left, and she said she was afraid to go over and see Pogo at Esther's house because it would make Esther feel bad, be hard on Pogo because Pogo loved her so much. So Pogo ran into the room and ran right past Mother and jumped up onto Esther. And Esther said, "Me and Pogo's getting along just fine!" So that's one of Mother's favorite stories. And last night you could tell, she really loved Pogo. So what I told her, we just didn't have any — even though I was just thirteen, I didn't have any qualms about leaving Pogo because she loved him so.

**BStrozier:** One of the things I was struck by coming back was the sort of how things had gotten a little more formal in that not only the parties, but Dad would come home for lunch; we always had a sit-down lunch. We never did before, of course. And Mother would be there. And then Esther would always make pies for lunch and dinner. We were very, very spoiled. And then he would come home and they would either go out to a party or we would stay home, and we would have Esther cooking us meals. So I was always trying to look for sort of links to a past I remembered, and I remember one funny experience. Dad was driving Chuck to a prom, and he was joking later, he said, "I wear many hats here as a president; I'm driving my son as a chauffeur."

**Sellers:** So that would have been a Leon High prom?

**AStrozier:** Yes, Leon High event.

**Sellers:** And you went to the dem school the entire time that you were here, because it went on into middle school.

**AStrozier:** Right; I finished seventh grade.

**Sellers:** Did you have any special hiding places or nooks in the house?

**AStrozier:** Up there behind the stairs; that was really good.

**BStrozier:** Did you have a lot of friends over?

**AStrozier:** I did, I had a lot of friends over.

**BStrozier:** That must have been a big treat for them, I guess.

**AStrozier:** Yes, they thought it was great fun.

**Sellers:** Did you ever feel a sense of having your privacy invaded by so many people being in the house?

**AStrozier:** I don't think so. I think because the second floor was well separated. People didn't generally come up there unless they were friends. There were just a lot of parties. The one party I remember – I got pneumonia when I was about eleven, so I was on a lot of medication. I was lying in my bed and sort of in and out of consciousness, and I just remember there was a party going on down the stairs. And Mother kept coming into my room, and she felt so guilty, because she kept saying, “Oh, my poor daughter has pneumonia and I have this party I have to do!” And she just felt terrible. But I was fine, really. But it was very odd, and it must have been very hard for her.

**Sellers:** She had been just a mother for so long, and suddenly she was a hostess and a first lady and the mother had to kind of take second billing, and she wasn't comfortable with that.

**AStrozier:** That's right. I also remember — when we were there near the end, I think they built the little lane – there was a little circular drive in the front, which we had called Margaret's Lane after my mother. I don't think that name stayed. But after dinner — the last few months before my Dad died, I remember I was getting to be interested in boys and everything. So after dinner, Dad and I would go for a walk and we would hold hands and skip. It was really fun. And then I would tell him about my boyfriends, and he was really interested. It was so sweet; it was very, very nice.

**Sellers:** Did your mom do any special plantings or anything? Add to the landscaping at all?

**AStrozier:** She may have, but I don't know. Dad, though, is the one who — he wanted to have a garden, and so there was a big, big vegetable garden. If you look at the front of the house, it was down here to the left — because Dad had grown up very poor in Georgia, and always had a garden. He loved the garden. So we had lots of things in this vegetable garden. He'd go down there and mess around down there.

**Sellers:** He didn't tend it all by himself?

**AStrozier:** No, Alonso did that. But Mother – I'll have to ask her. I don't remember. I know she loved the garden.

**BStrozier:** There is one other aspect to this whole picture I believe we should mention. Mother's father came and lived in a little house nearby. There was a little house in back. And

he had dinner every night with the family, right?

**ASTrozier:** Yes.

**BStrozier:** And I think that, for her, was a bit of a burden.

**ASTrozier:** Yeah, that was the last year, I think, and that was a stressor for sure. Because he wasn't an easy man.

**BStrozier:** And Dad very graciously said to him, "Come live here." He went to school; he was retired. But he became part of the family.

**ASTrozier:** He just reveled in it. He loved being in the president's house and going to all the social events – and going to school. He was a very intelligent man —

**Sellers:** He took classes?

**ASTrozier:** Yes. He went to school here. And he went to Europe.

**BStrozier:** For him, it was just perfect.

**ASTrozier:** Perfect. But Mother said – what happened was her mother died, and then, Clough was his name, didn't know what to do, and she said, "Oh," to my father, "I just really don't want him to live with us." And Dad said, "If we have all of this and cannot share it, then what kind of people are we? So we must share this with him." And so they did.

**Sellers:** Did he go back to Chicago with you?

**ASTrozier:** No, after Dad died he moved back to Denver, where he had lived. Mother just couldn't take care of her dad because she had to go to work full-time and everything. So he went to Denver, I think into a retirement center. But it was fun, and Esther was remarking on him. He just loved living there.

**BStrozier:** But it was another person to sort of maintain. I don't think you could say she relished that by any manner.

**ASTrozier:** No, because he was pretty self-absorbed and just not her favorite person to have there.

**BStrozier:** If we think of things later, which we probably will, we can do what?

**Sellers:** Let me turn this off and we'll talk about that.

End