

Henderson Memories:

City of
Henderson
Living Histories

CITY OF HENDERSON
LIVING HISTORY INTERVIEW
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PART 2

1 INTERVIEWER: What does it mean to live the American dream to
2 you?

3 MS. HUGHES: Well, I can give you a personal example. When I
4 arrived here, I was pretty fresh out of law school, burdened with student debts
5 that seemed astronomical at the time. I lived in an apartment for about two
6 years and then decided that I needed to move to Henderson. If I was going to
7 work in Henderson, I needed to move to Henderson for two reasons. One, it
8 wasn't easy to get out here 20 years ago. And two, it was obvious to me from
9 the very beginning that this was a special place, and I really wanted to live
10 here so that I would have a better feel in my job for what the community was
11 about. So I was able to buy a house very early - - early in my life I was able
12 to own a house and raise a family.

13 My entire family has been born here. All three of my children were
14 born are being raised in Henderson and attending Henderson schools and
15 participating in Henderson soccer leagues, baseball leagues, swim teams.
16 And now I have a son in high school, graduating this year, getting ready to go
17 to college.

18 I have a daughter who's a freshman at a brand new high school,
19 Coronado, up in a brand new section of town that I'm very proud of because I
20 worked for years on the Anthem project and the annexation of land into the
21 city of Henderson in that part of town. And I can remember when the first
22 project in that area was proposed. It was miles from nowhere, but not very
23 much different than Green Valley was when it initially began being developed.

1 It was miles from nowhere. So I knew from past history that those miles
2 would develop quickly and close quickly and pretty soon everything would be
3 attached, all the communities one to another. And that is exactly what has
4 happened.

5 INTERVIEWER: You mentioned the annexation of Anthem, are there
6 any other annexations that come to mind over the last 20 years?

7 MS. HUGHES: Yeah. Oh, yes. We've had several major annexations
8 of - - I think one of the first ones I remember working on was the annexation
9 of what is now the property bounded by 215, Stephanie, Sunset and the
10 freeway. That entire area was a County island until it was annexed into the
11 city after PEPCON. And, of course, it came in as one large parcel, so we
12 were able to work with the developers and master plan the area. And now
13 that area contains commercial; it contains office; it contains single-family
14 housing, multi-family housing; it contains schools. It's got everything. And
15 what was important about that annexation is it brought together, literally
16 brought together, connected, literally, the older, original part of town with the
17 newer, Green Valley area of town. It was a giant chasm between the older
18 and the newer parts of town. As soon as that was brought into Henderson
19 and started developing, I think, a great change came over the community
20 because there was not any more a feeling of new to old, us to them. I think it
21 became one entire community with the connection of those homes.

22 INTERVIEWER: What year was that? When did that happen?

1 MS. HUGHES: That would have been, gosh, about 10 years ago, I
2 think.

3 INTERVIEWER: Obviously, you have a unique perspective of growth.
4 Why is it important for the city of Henderson - - if you're talking to someone
5 out in the viewing audience - - why is it important that the City continue to
6 annex property and to continue to grow?

7 MS. HUGHES: The issue of growth is really very interesting because
8 the people that are here now are largely the product of Henderson's growth,
9 but in some cases there's a feeling that we should stop growth and
10 concentrate on what we have and leave it alone. We're big enough. But, as
11 a practical matter, I think, most people don't understand and appreciate that
12 the way the laws are set up in the State of Nevada and the way the tax
13 distributions work to the communities back from the State, growth is an
14 important factor. Unless you keep growing, your tax revenues are adversely
15 impacted. And if that occurs, we won't be able to continue providing the kind
16 of quality services that we are providing to the people who are already here.
17 So there is an important need to, in an orderly, planned, fiscally-prudent way,
18 continue growing.

19 INTERVIEWER: Do you think it's also important - - I mean, I would
20 definitely say, like, you talked about the annexation of the County, that there's
21 definitely been annexations that have been about rounding out the
22 community, you know, protecting your front door and being able - - you know,
23 as you said earlier, Henderson has been very much a family-planned

1 community. Is part of that growth and part of trying to acquire certain property
2 really protecting the heritage of Henderson?

3 MS. HUGHES: We have, through the years, been very aware that we
4 need to annex property on our borders, which are ever expanding. And the
5 reason for that, and the reason why that's been important to us, is because
6 Henderson has development standards, which are different from the
7 development standards in the County. And it's not meant as a criticism, by
8 any means, of the County, they have a different role than a city has in a
9 community. But because our development standards are more stringent than
10 theirs, we are able to better control growth, in terms of making sure the
11 roadways are appropriate, making sure the houses and communities are built
12 in ways so that their values will be retained. We're very concerned about
13 what uses go next to what uses. We try not to have - - and I think we've
14 succeeded very, very well in not having haphazard zoning decisions, so that
15 you have incompatible uses next to each other.

16 And it's been important to us to control the growth at our boundaries
17 because there are some examples of things that the County has approved
18 that we would not have. And we want to be able to continue imposing these
19 more family-friendly design guidelines to the development as it occurs in our
20 community.

21 INTERVIEWER: What do you think we have to look forward to in the
22 future development and growth in Henderson?

1 MS. HUGHES: I think we have an opportunity to continue growing and
2 to continue growing in an even more positive way than what we've
3 experienced in the last 20 years.

4 I think that we have a new focus on education with the establishment
5 of the State College. And while I realize that there are still some people in the
6 community who are not 100 percent persuaded about the value of that
7 college, I think that in the next five to ten years, the value of that college to
8 this community, and, actually, to the entire community of the state, will be
9 very, very apparent. What I see happening, in terms of Henderson's future, is
10 continued growth. Continued growth past the Anthem area, past the Seven
11 Hills area. Naturally speaking, that is where the growth will be occurring.

12 But what else I see happening that I'm very excited about is a
13 revitalization and a redevelopment of some of the older sections of town. I
14 think that because we are one town, I think that there's a sentiment in the
15 community to look to the older sections of town and see what can be done to
16 revitalize them and to ensure that the people who live in the older sections of
17 town have good roads, for example, have communities that are strong. We
18 don't want to experience any kind of decline and decay, and we're actively
19 making sure that that doesn't happen.

20 We've got some - - a very interesting infill, large infill projects on the
21 books - - which, I think, in future years will be exciting. We've got, for
22 example, the Landwell Company proposing the Provenance project, which
23 will take extremely contaminated, un-developable property and, literally,

1 transform it into another family-oriented community. It's going to take years
2 because the environmental efforts are monumental. But it's going to be a
3 project at the end of the day, which will serve as a model for other
4 environmentally-challenged property and communities throughout the
5 country. And I think it represents, again, us being on the cutting edge of
6 technology, in this case, and of environmental technology and in planning.

7 I see a great future for the city of Henderson. I think the next 50 years
8 will be just as interesting, if not more so, than the last 50 have been.

9 INTERVIEWER: In terms of, like, some of the things, you know, that
10 people might not be aware of on - - not that it's every goal, but what are two
11 or three goals that the City might have in the future planning over the next 10
12 or 15 years.

13 MS. HUGHES: One of our goals is to try to remain on the cutting
14 edge. We want to be able to be responsive to the needs of our community.
15 We want to make sure that everybody who lives in Henderson understands
16 that their City government and the employees and the elected officials in their
17 City government really, literally, and truly are here for them.

18 We want to be able to stay flexible so that we can respond to the
19 changing needs in the community. That's been one of our major strengths for
20 the last 20 years that I've personally observed is our ability to be flexible, and
21 our ability to be creative, and our ability to respond to the changing needs of
22 the community. And there's no disconnect between the citizens who live here
23 and the public servants that are here to serve them. We really feel a strong

1 connection to our - - and I think the reason that we, as government
2 employees, feel that way is because we're part of the community.

3 Most of us, if not the vast, vast majority of us, live here. We're
4 shopping at our malls. Our children are attending our schools, playing in our
5 parks. We are part of the community. We're not just people that come, work
6 ten hours a day, and leave. We actually go home to our homes in our own
7 community. So we have large, large stake in the outcome of our growth and
8 development.

9 INTERVIEWER: Have you been able to live the American dream in
10 Henderson?

11 MS. HUGHES: I have absolutely lived the American dream in
12 Henderson. I have owned a home. I've had three wonderful children. I've
13 participated in community activities such as Safe House Project. I have had a
14 wonderful job that has been changing for 20 years and is still changing and
15 it's exciting to come to work every day. Every day is exciting to come to work.
16 I've got everything. I've got absolutely everything a person could ever want.