INTERVIEW WITH ANN E. MURRAY

FEBRUARY 3, 2009

KEK: Hello, this is Karen Kalnins, I am a reference librarian at the Oklahoma City University Law Library and today is Tuesday, February 3rd, 2009, it’s about 2:05 in the afternoon and I AEM here in Chickasha, Oklahoma talking with, I’m going to be talking with Ms. Ann Murray. She is an attorney here at the Chickasha, well, I guess the Grady County Child Support Office. And this interview is part of the larger oral history project that the Oklahoma City University Law Library is sponsoring. And, this project, well, as a part of this project we are going around and interviewing attorneys and judges throughout the state of Oklahoma. So, welcome Ms. Murray.

AEM: Thank you.

KEK: I was so pleased when you agreed to an interview today.

AEM: Well, I was excited about it.

KEK: Well, great, great. Thank you so much for your time today, I appreciate it. Well, what drew you to the law Ms. Murray?

AEM: When I was in fifth grade, I grew up in Houston and when I was in fifth grade there was an attorney named Percy Foreman. And he was a famous trial lawyer in Houston and we got to go watch him defend a murderer and it was a drive by shooting. Number one I’d never heard of drive-by shootings so that interesting. And seeing him defend the person was interesting and I think the law just kind of, I got the bug at that time.

KEK: And how old were you at the time?

AEM: I would say probably ten.

KEK: Did you go with your family or with a school?

AEM: School, it was a school fieldtrip.

KEK: Did you get to talk to this attorney after the trial?

AEM: I think he came and spoke to all of us, but I don’t remember talking to him specifically.

KEK: And what kind of steps then did you take in your academic career to get prepared for law school?
AEM: Well, the advice is to do well in whatever you’re going to do and that will get you into law school. I was interested in government and things like that so I majored in political science with a minor in women’s studies.

KEK: Where did you go to undergraduate?

AEM: OU.

KEK: And, where did you apply for law school then?

AEM: I applied to OU, Baylor, I was accepted to those two, and then the University of Texas where I was not accepted.

KEK: What made you decide then to go to OU?

AEM: I was working on campus as an academic advisor. And the Dean of my college kept giving me a hard time for thinking of going anywhere else. He’d pull out books and say, “Look, this is, OU is ranked so much higher than Baylor in law schools.” So, he wore me down and I decided to stay.

KEK: And what year did you start law school?

AEM: I started in 1987.

KEK: And when did you graduate?

AEM: ’91, I took some time off during law school so it wasn’t a straight three years.

KEK: And tell me about your time at OU law school.

AEM: It was interesting. OU, we had probably half and half as far as the sexes went, it wasn’t skewed one way or the other. I was terrified my first finals I think like every law student. In fact, my second contracts exam, I went out to the professor and I told her I just couldn’t do this anymore. It was just horrible and she talked to me and was very kind and sent me back in. I ended up making one of two A pluses in the class so I did okay. I was involved in some groups, the Women in Law group, the Delta Phi Law group I think, and that was about it. We had a study group and that was probably what got me through law school were the people in my study group.

KEK: How important do you think having a support system in law school is?

AEM: I think it’s mandatory. I think if you don’t have one, you’re almost assuredly going to fail.
KEK: Are there any professors that you remember or any other memorable experiences about law school?

AEM: This wasn’t a professor that I had and it’s probably a very macabre story but, there are two parts to it. OU has a pit area where you can sit in between classes or did at that time. Now it’s really nice but back then it was a pit and we could hear one of the professors screaming at the top of his lungs to a student and he was, excuse my language, he was saying, “You put it in a trust, you put it in a goddamn trust.” And one of our friends had been in that class and it was her that he was yelling at. It was terrible, it was a property class and you know, you didn’t even talk about trusts or anything and so she didn’t know what the answer was and he was very upset about it but to all of us out in the pit it was rather amusing hearing that coming out of the classroom. The sadder note of that is that this professor committed suicide in between semesters and the ironic thing about that though is he hadn’t graded any of his exams before he did. And so everyone just got passes in the classes he taught because he hadn’t graded any of them.

KEK: So, instead of handing out letter grades, they just….

AEM: They just got passes.

KEK: Gosh, what was this professor’s name?

AEM: Joe Rarick.

KEK: I’m very sorry to hear that he…..

AEM: I am too, he was a character.

KEK: It sounds like it, it definitely sounds like it. As a woman, did you, how was, did you sense any sort of treatment or say, did you sense anything from the professors or from the other students that men were treated differently than women, was there different treatment?

AEM: Not necessarily different. I think there was a subtle vein running through that the guys had a little more clout or standing within the law school community. For instance, I was in the Women in Law club and the guys would put it down and do things like that. They never did anything to sabotage it or anything like that but they dismissed it, it was very, they were very dismissive. And that seemed to carry weight whereas the women in the club were seen as probably mad feminists or something like that. In little ways it was there but not open and flagrant at all.

KEK: How about, have you been back since then to any kind of OU law events?

AEM: I’ve been to the law school but I haven’t been to any events probably, except right after I graduated. So, nothing recent.
KEK: So, you don’t know if that dismissive attitude, at least toward that particular club, if that still exists or not.

AEM: No, I don’t. But I did notice just going to the library that it still seems that there are many men and women, that still a pretty equal number attend there.

KEK: Well, what were your plans after law school?

AEM: Well, I always wanted to do family law so, that was a given. I took all the family law classes and prepared for that. I also did a certificate in child abuse and neglect. So, I got to do internships at the DA’s office and the juvenile office and the public defender’s juvenile office and the DA’s juvenile office. Both here and in Tulsa because during this time period we moved but I got to finish up my certificate program. And so, in addition to family law I was interested in anything to do with children basically. I started doing child support as an intern and really liked it, liked the hearing part of it, doing hearings, doing trials, those kinds of things. And kept doing child support after I graduated and am still doing it.

KEK: You are indeed, you are indeed. Well, tell me about those internships that you did both at the DA’s office and the public defender’s office, what do you think you learned from those experiences?

AEM: Well, you definitely learn how much difficulty there can be out there for children and how hard it is. I knew of course about child abuse and neglect and how horrible it is and stuff, but when you’re right upon it, like the DA is looking at the cases or going to the trials, and seeing the horrible things that parents do to their children, it is just heartbreaking. So, I probably got a little more life, a little more grown-up being in those experiences and those places.

KEK: And, why family law and why kids?

AEM: That’s a good question. I, well I always thought family law would be very interesting and I wanted something that was interesting that you would have trials and hearings but you would also have a real people interest. The law is not set up this way but my goal was to have an accountant, a therapist, and me all work together in family law cases so that things would work out well and maybe people would get the help that they needed that I’m afraid they don’t get because of the way the practice is right now.

KEK: And why do you think your ideal is to have all of those people involved?

AEM: Well, I wanted to do rich people so, I was dreaming and I thought the accountant would be necessary to help work out finances and those kinds of things, and I think the therapist is more than necessary to either help them get through the process that they’re going through or help them build up from where they came and help them get through it that way. And then I would serve kind of as the point person in getting everything done.
KEK: So, you really believe that there, at least in the ideal situation for family law, there should be sort of a holistic approach?

AEM: Yes, definitely. And I think if you could work it out in any form, any place in the law it would be a good thing.

KEK: Have you encountered in your years of practice, have you encountered any practices that have been set up like that, or any other?

AEM: They can’t be, it’s an ethical violation. I haven’t been in other states because I think I’ve heard that they do have them but here no.

KEK: So, in Oklahoma it’s forbidden for attorneys to practice with non-attorneys, is that right?

AEM: Correct, that is correct.

KEK: Alright, just to get that on the record. So, OU offered this certificate program, and what made you decide to go for the certificate?

AEM: Again, I think it was just I had a big desire to want to help, to want to help people and that was one way to do it. Law school really doesn’t raise you up to be nurturing and caring. And that’s not bad, you learn things and you get tough and that’s good stuff but when I had the opportunity to join this program it was a time where I could learn how to do those kinds of, not learn how but practice those things.

KEK: Do you think that getting that certificate helped you in your later career?

AEM: I think that it gave me insights that I probably wouldn’t have had. How difficult it is to be an attorney sometimes, and how rewarding it can be also.

KEK: We’ll stop the recording now.

KEK: Hi, this is Karen Kalnins again, this is the second half of the interview with Attorney Ann Murray. And we are still here in Chickasha, Oklahoma and it is probably about 2:20, 2:25 or so in the afternoon. And, this will be the second half of the interview. So, you graduated from law school, and what was your first job out of law school?

AEM: I continued with the child support office in Tulsa, Oklahoma and did attorney stuff instead of intern stuff then which was nice. I got to start doing hearings and things like that.

KEK: And what do you feel like are the most important qualities for an attorney who wants to work in this area of the law?

AEM: I think you’re going to, if you’re going to work for the state at all you’re going to have to realize you’re not going to be paid the same as a private attorney and be okay with that or be
ready to fight about it. But, that’s not going to do any good so you’re going to have to be okay with it. I think anyone could be here it’s just very intense work at times. People dealing with money and children creates an environment that can be difficult. A lot of parents think that because they are paying their child support they should be allowed to see their children and if there’s an order, they probably should be but we can’t enforce that and we don’t do that and we get a lot of angry people about that. And I can understand that, if my children were taken from me and I wasn’t able to see them I would be very upset about that too. So, someone that doesn’t mind working for the state, someone that has stamina to stick with it, and probably someone that has a more optimistic attitude that buys into the premise that children need support from their parents and that it’s our job to make sure that happens.

**KEK:** And, what kinds of things did you learn in this first job out of law school?

**AEM:** Let’s see, I got to have my first trial, it was to a judge, not to a jury so that was pretty exciting. I got to learn a lot about trial work because you do lots of hearings when you do contempts for payment of child support. I learned how to speak to private attorneys without wanting to slam the phone down because they could get testy. I learned how to run the child support guidelines by hand, I still know how to do it and lots of private attorneys don’t know how to do it and so they’re always impressed when I’m doing it. I feel like it’s a magic trick or something so, that’s fun. But, I learned how to work together. There were four or five of us attorneys and so you learn how to back up your buddies and help them when they need help and they help you when you need help and you’re all in it together.

**KEK:** Now, do you still do trials now?

**AEM:** Sort of. We do hearings every Wednesday and they’re administrative hearings before an administrative law judge. And then we do contempt dockets twice a month. And, I would say, maybe one or two actually go to trial a month and they’re bench trials, not jury trials. Although we could have the possibility, they’re allowed jury trials but no one usually chooses to do that.

**KEK:** What do you think are some of the critical qualities for someone who wants to do trial work?

**AEM:** I think you have to be strong. I think you have to want it more than the other person does, probably arrogant. I mean that sounds terrible but you have to really believe in yourself and know that you’re going to win because if you don’t you’re setting yourself up to lose. And so I think, and that’s probably why most good trial attorneys are arrogant because that serves them well in their practice.

**KEK:** Now, how long were you in Tulsa?
AEM: Let’s see, I worked for four years in Tulsa and then I took some time off. And, let’s see, I came back in 2003, in between I had children and foster children.

KEK: So, and then you didn’t go back to Tulsa obviously, you came here to Chickasha?

AEM: Actually I went back to Tulsa for three years and then came to Chickasha.

KEK: And, why did you, how did you happen to come to Grady County, to Chickasha?

AEM: They, my husband was coming to law school, so we were moving to this side of the state and they had an opening here in this office. And so I came down and we talked, and looked it over, and it’s a good fit. So, I’m glad I’m here.

KEK: So, you were able just to transfer sort of down here?

AEM: Yes, it worked out really well.

KEK: Yeah, it sounds like it. Now, what, between the time that you started working and now, what kinds of changes have you seen in the law?

AEM: Well, I think broadly, Supreme Court wise, things are getting more conservative and civil rights seem to be going by the wayside a little bit, more than I would appreciate. And that’s kind of scary is to see that real conservative court. But, part of it is good in seeing how some of them come out and maybe move a little bit to the left, not very but pick up different decisions hopefully. Other things, the whole technological revolution. When I started we had word processing sort of if it worked, and copiers, if they worked. I’m making it sound like it’s real old-fashioned but we really, we were the state, things did break down a lot. We didn’t have a lot of the technology that we have today. I’d like to think the law is getting and the lawyers are getting nicer to each other. I think almost all the attorneys that I work with, you can call them on the phone, talk to them about their case, and they’ll reciprocate, it’s not a dog eat dog kind of situation. And that’s nice because I think they’re teaching that in the law schools. They were teaching it when I was there which is you don’t have to be hateful and disagreeable to work a case and get it taken care of.

KEK: Why do you think that kind of collegiality is important?

AEM: Well, I think it’s important because you’re going to be working with this person long after this case goes away and you may be on the same side the next time instead of opposing sides so you don’t want to cause difficulty in a relationship which is going to be ongoing throughout your work life.

KEK: Absolutely, absolutely. Tell me about one of your most memorable cases, either here or in Tulsa.
AEM: Okay. Well, this is my first trial in Tulsa. And, I had a gentleman who had just not been paying his child support, it was a contempt hearing. And, he needed to go to jail in my opinion. So, they let me do this hearing and I asked him what he does for a living. And this is an example of a case where you shouldn’t ask a question that you don’t know the answer to because he replied, “I do silver recovery.” And I said, “What is that?” He goes on to explain that when they used to have Polaroid cameras and they would come apart, on the part that didn’t have the picture, there’s silver embedded in there, not much, but some. And, it was his job to take that out and then he would sell it and get money. Okay, so he’s told me this and I’m thinking, there is no way I can get around this. I mean, that’s all he does, that’s all he can do, and I did end up, he was found not guilty of contempt because he just had no ability and I could go on but it kept getting worse, each question I asked.

KEK: So, it turned out that his career was not very say, let’s just say, it didn’t generate a lot of income.

AEM: No, it did not.

KEK: And, what, what are the standards, how much income does someone need to generate in order for you all to be able to collect child support?

AEM: Well, we collect from everyone hopefully, I mean, that’s our goal. We usually impute minimum wage to people if they’re not working. It would be what they could earn full-time at a minimum wage job and then our goal is that they get out and find at least a minimum wage job so that they’re able to pay their child support. The people that don’t have to pay at all are people that get SSI which is like a federal welfare and that’s by statute. It just says that’s not considered income and in reality it’s such a small amount and the people probably really need it that they wouldn’t be able to pay child support.

KEK: What about now, in these difficult economic times, how has it been for your office and your caseload?

AEM: We have a lot of people requesting modifications of their child support, wanting it lowered from before. We usually do modifications just once a year, not once a year during our year but going across the case. But we’re finding some that we need to do more quickly than that. That it’s a case where the person worked on an oil rig or whatever and it’s shut down so they’re not earning 70 dollars an hour or 20 dollars an hour; they’re back to minimum wage. And so, we don’t want to create great deficits when it’s not these people’s fault. If it’s someone that quits a really high paying job because they want to or you know, they don’t want to pay child support, that has a different flavor than someone whose rig shut down, really needs help. So, we are moving into where we have more modifications going on right now. We also probably have a little more contempts going on because people are using the money on themselves and their home first, before they pay their child support.
KEK: And, I also, wanted to find out, what, tell me about the child support guidelines. I think we’ll stop the recording now.

KEK: Hi, this is Karen Kalnins, I’m a reference librarian at the Oklahoma City University Law Library and this is the third part of the interview here with Attorney Ann Murray. We are still in Chickasha, Oklahoma and it’s probably around 2:35 or 2:40 in the afternoon. And I was going to ask her about the child support guidelines and how child support is calculated.

AEM: Child support is set by the legislature so, I think every couple of years they are supposed to look at the amounts but it’s so overwhelming it takes longer than that in between times and they’re getting ready to change this summer. But currently, the guidelines are based on the combined gross income of both parents. You get that number and then you go to the guidelines which are in the statute and you look at the combined gross income, as close to 50 dollars without going over, and go across onto the number of children and you’ll determine what the combined monthly child support should be, not, that’s not what one parent pays, it’s what, if both of them were together, they would be paying for their child. And so then you do percentages of the, you make a percentage of mom and a percentage of dad of the whole and you multiply that by the child support amount and that’s where you get what your child support is going to be. And then you add into it daycare and health insurance. And then we have a thing called shared parenting where if someone is keeping a child over 121 overnights, they can get credit against their child support for that time period.

KEK: So, say if somebody has a shared, has a joint custody maybe arrangement.…. 

AEM: Exactly.

KEK: Okay, so they don’t, somehow the child support will sort of even out.

AEM: We hope so. Right now the way it’s set up, it’s really hard because when you hit 122 nights, it goes down quite a bit and that’s only a third. So, the person who has the child two-thirds of the time is getting a lot less child support than just half.

KEK: So, that can probably create problems.

AEM: We’re working on it.

KEK: And who, who are mostly the people that end up paying child support, is it mostly men or women here in the state of Oklahoma or does it just vary by case?

AEM: It’s mostly men are the obligors for child support. Although, there are quite a few women that are ordered to pay and do pay child support. You know, I hate the term deadbeat dad and I wish we could remove that from our vocabulary because the men come in angry and I don’t blame them if I were labeled like that I would come in angry. And I have to say, “Did I
call you that, no, I did not call you that. Do I think of you in that way? No. I know you’re having problems or I know something is going on, let’s work it out, let’s get it back to where you can pay your child support, so that your children are supported because you do love them. I can tell that you do.”

KEK: So, would you rather try to work something out first or go straight to a contempt hearing if someone is not paying?

AEM: Oh, we always try to work something out first. Usually what we do is we’ll set up an arraignment and they’ll plead guilty and we’ll set up a payment plan. And then after that maybe have it for sentencing and then we may not, as long as they abide by the payment plan, we might not ever see them again. But if they don’t we do a motion to accelerate the sentencing and get back in court. But usually we still work out a payment plan to help them out. And then, you know, it takes a lot before it gets to a contempt hearing.

KEK: And what about these payment plans, is the payment automatically deducted from the obligor’s paycheck or do they pay to the courts?

AEM: They’re automatically deducted from the paycheck, it’s called an income assignment and they’re statutory, they have to go in. A lot of people are afraid that they’re garnishments and that they’ll be punished at work for having them but they really are a separate animal even if they kind of work the same way. But we, as long as they are employed, that’s how it happens. If they’re not employed and they’re sending in payments we have a central registry that they send payments in where they go through to the other party.

KEK: Now, some people would say, well, okay, you’ve gotten this case it’s gotten to a contempt hearing and you want to throw the person in jail. How, how effective is jail time for folks who have been consistently noncompliant?

AEM: It depends where you are. We do Caddo County too which is a more rural county than Grady and there a lot of unemployed people and they have families that don’t have money. Well, you put someone in jail and they’re not employed and their family doesn’t have any money, they’re going to sit there probably for the six months that they can be sentenced to. But a lot of the time family members will come up with at least something. Now, a purge fee is set when someone is sent to jail and if they pay that purge fee they can get out. They hold the keys of the jail cell in their own hands is the theory. And, families, they’ll call and say, let’s say the purge fee is 2500 dollars, well you might have a family that calls and says, “We’ll pay, we can pay 1500, would you let him out?” And you know, we might be willing to do that because we’re getting money for the child and maybe he can get out and work.

KEK: So, is the purge fee then if it’s paid, is that added on to the child support, does it go into the bank that way?
AEM: It’s paid through our central registry too and would go out to the, well it depends if there’s money owed to the state or not. There’s a whole, they like to use the term buckets, there are different buckets but at least the current support amount would go to the custodial parent.

KEK: Now, you mentioned that the other county that this office serves is Caddo County and that’s rural, and Grady County is also fairly rural, how does the rural compare to the urban where you used to, the urban office in Tulsa where you used to work? Is the demographic different are the issues that you’re dealing with different?

AEM: It is incredibly different. It was kind of a culture shock when I moved down here. The office I was at in Tulsa was the West office and we had most of the downtown area, we had poor areas, and a lot of African-American areas. And so, the first time that I walked into a docket here and there wasn’t a single African-American person, it was like, I mean, not that they’re full of African-Americans at Tulsa West, but it was like, okay, this is different, I’m in a whole new place. And everybody has cowboy boots on, it was just very different. In Tulsa there are more jobs for people. When you tell someone to go out and get a job they’re more likely to be able to do it. Here, it’s not so easy. Delta Faucet closed down and all of those people are looking for jobs. It just makes it more difficult.

KEK: It sounds like it, it sounds it. And how are the, how are your clients different here?

AEM: Our client is the state of Oklahoma; I have to put in that plug right now. We don’t represent either party but if you’re looking at the parties, the custodial parents, how they differ here. I’m not sure that they do differ as much as the obligors. They are wanting to take care of their children. I don’t see as many big families here where in Tulsa it wasn’t unusual to have three or four kids in a family. We have them here every once in a while, but usually it’s the obligor that has several families and a couple of kids in each one.

KEK: Well, I’m glad that you clarified that about your client. I of course knew that you’re working for the state of Oklahoma but I guess the way I phrased my question was a bit misleading. Tell me about some of your professional activities that you’ve been involved in.

AEM: I was on the Family Law Section in Tulsa. I’m in the Family Law Section for the Oklahoma Bar Association. Since last year I’ve been President of the Grady County Bar Association and have been CLE Chair and all sorts of things trying to get back up and going. It had stopped for several years and I told one of the other attorneys I said, “You get it set up, I’ll do it.” And he did, darn him. But, it’s been going well. We do, we’ve had CLEs at every meeting and we meet every other month, so it’s been working out.

KEK: That’s wonderful. How is it to be a County Bar Association President?

AEM: Well, it’s pretty boring.
**KEK:** What types of things do you do?

**AEM:** I send e-mails out to remind people to show up at the meetings. And then I send e-mails out to correct my e-mails that I sent out to remind them of the meetings. And, I talk people into doing things like CLEs or putting on the Christmas Party or things like that. I don’t do a whole lot, Law Day is coming up and I’m hoping we can get someone as our Law Day Chair other than me and do something for Law Day.

**KEK:** How big, how many attorneys are there in Grady County?

**AEM:** That I have e-mail addresses for, is probably 25 but I think there are more than that, maybe another 10 or 15 that either have retired or just haven’t come to the bar meetings so I don’t have their e-mail addresses.

**KEK:** How important do you think the bar association is for both rural and urban attorneys?

**AEM:** I think it’s very important. I think it’s how you get to know the judges in your area because the judges come to the meetings too just like you do. And it’s a good way to interact and learn who they are and what they want in their courtrooms. In a larger city of course it’s more networking going on and it’s more expensive to be a member of the bar. And here it has more collegial feel to me, we’re all getting together and kind of having fun and eating lunch and learning a little bit.

**KEK:** And have you had a chance to get to know your, the judges that you practice in front of?

**AEM:** In Grady County well, in Caddo, we only practice in front of one judge in each county so you get to know them pretty well and what they want and how they want things done. And yes, I’ve been able to do that.

**KEK:** That’s good, yeah, that is helpful.

**AEM:** Oh, very helpful because if you do something not the way they want it done it causes a lot of trouble.

**KEK:** Absolutely, and it could affect your case.

**AEM:** Oh yeah.

**KEK:** Ms. Murray, what is some of the best advice that you’ve gotten over the years?

**AEM:** Okay, I’m going to answer this the wrong way. Instead of the best advice, I’m going to go with the worst advice I had which all through law school people said, “Don’t become an attorney, quit law school now, don’t do it.” And I was so mad, I thought well, they’re just jealous because another attorney is coming out and they don’t want the competition. I didn’t
mean me specifically but all of the law students. And then when I got out I thought, I see myself
talking to young law students and I say, “Don’t go to law school.” And I’m sure they feel the
same way so, it’s bad advice either way because going to law school you learn a lot, you learn
how to think a certain way which is not necessarily a bad thing. Good advice that I’ve gotten is
be kind to others and do unto others what you would have them do unto you. If you do that,
you’re doing pretty well.

KEK: Good advice. What kind of advice would you give someone coming out or someone who
is in school now, like your husband?

AEM: To my husband I would say, get a job, quick. You know, our family has a motto and it’s
“Follow your bliss.” And that’s the advice I would give, is follow your bliss and do what you
know you want to do.

KEK: Good advice. Is there anything Ms. Murray that I have not asked you that you would like
to say or that you would like to talk about?

AEM: Nope, not that I can think of.

KEK: What continues to motivate you? I mean you’ve, it’s now 2009 and you’ve been working
here, you’ve been continuing to do child support cases, do you ever consider doing anything else
or another aspect of family law?

AEM: I do but I think that, I’m pretty involved in our, in the DHS organization and doing things
like working on pleadings and things like that. And I enjoy those things as well as what I do in
the office. And, I don’t really think that I’m looking for another job right now. What motivates
me, keeps motivating me is the good I know we’re doing. You know, I don’t get to see it at all
but I know it’s there. And, that’s the important thing.

KEK: Now, you said you were active in the Department of Human Services generally, is there a
working group that works on form pleadings or those types of things?

AEM: Yes, there is. It’s part of, we have a new name, Oklahoma Child Support Services, it
used to be Child Support Enforcement Division but we changed our name at the beginning of the
year so it’s one of the committees under OCSS.

KEK: What is your directive?

AEM: We’re trying to get a new computer system and so the pleadings review committee is
reviewing all the old pleadings and the new pleadings that have been suggested and trying to
make them uniform.

KEK: That sounds great. Do you all have private attorneys who come in and serve on this
committee as well or just DHS employees?
AEM: Just DHS employees.

KEK: Where is that in the process, how far have you all gotten in terms of getting the new computer system?

AEM: Oh goodness. They keep saying it’s coming so I think in another year or two it’ll be out. Some of the pleadings have had to be loaded on our current system just because laws have changed and things like that. And we couldn’t wait, we couldn’t just be sitting out there wrong for that length of time.

KEK: Do you think that this new system will help you in your work?

AEM: I think it will help the caseworkers more than me because I really don’t know the system all that well and they’re the ones that prepare the pleadings. But the pleadings I would prepare from it, yes, it would be very helpful.

KEK: Do you think that the budget shortfall or the current budget crisis might affect that?

AEM: It probably will delay it. We really got hammered this year with no increase in funding, a standstill budget. And so, it looks like that may happen again or we may be cut some. So, yes, that might delay things.

KEK: Well, Ms. Murray, I have nothing else. Do you have anything else?

AEM: I just really enjoyed talking with you.

KEK: I enjoyed talking with you. And thank you so much for your time, I really appreciate it. I know that you’re busy, you’re very busy, you have a lot of things going on so I appreciate your time today.

AEM: Well, thank you.

KEK: Thanks again.