

Transcription: Grand Canyon Historical Society

Interviewees: Anne Klein (AK) with Tom Sulpizio Jr.
Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)
Subject: The 1956 Grand Canyon plane crash's effect on Anne Klein and her family
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TM: Today is Thursday, September 23rd, 2021. This is a Grand Canyon Oral History interview with Anne Sceia Klein. My name is Tom Martin. This interview is being recorded in the backyard of our house, here in Flagstaff, Arizona; and it's a great day to have Anne here at the house. And we're going to talk about the 1956 air disaster over Grand Canyon. Anne, what year were you born?

AK: 1942.

TM: Okay. Where were you born?

AK: In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

TM: Okay. How are you related to the Sulpizio family?

AK: My father was married -- had a sister who was Genicia (sp?), and Genny had a daughter, and her daughter married Tom Sulpizio. So that's how we're related. And she's my first cousin, and so Tom is, Tom was also my first cousin. And their children, their child, is my second cousin -- first cousin once removed.

TM: This is Tom Junior?

AK: Tom Junior; uh-huh.

TM: Okay; all right. Did you grow up in Philadelphia?

AK: No, I grew up in Hammonton, New Jersey. So, after I was born, I moved -- we had the, the birth at Jefferson in Philadelphia, but then I moved to Hammonton, New Jersey.

TM: Okay, okay. And how did you know Genny and Tom?

AK: Ah -- how I knew...?

TM: Were they living there in New Jersey? Or...?

AK: Well, I knew Tom's mother; she was my first cousin. Her name was Immaculata and she and Tom were married. And I don't remember anything about their wedding; I just can't remember. But I remember that Tom was six weeks old, or three months old, was my recollection, of when the crash occurred.

TM: Okay; all right. I'm getting kind of a little confused here. Tom Junior's mother's name is?

AK: Immaculata.

TM: Immaculata. Okay. Did she have a nickname, for short?

AK: Yes, Mac. We all called her "Mac."

TM: All right; nice. So you were at Mac and Tom's wedding?

AK: I think I was, but I can't recall any of it.

TM: Okay. How old would you have been then? Was that in '56? What year was that?

AK: Probably '53. And I probably was 11 years old.

TM: Okay; all right. And was that in New Jersey? The wedding? Where they got...

AK: I think it was. Yes, it was. And probably in Hammonton, at Saint Joseph's Church.

TM: Okay. So your mom and dad, and Mac and Tom, would of been close? Kind of living in the same general area there?

AK: Yes, very close.

TM: Okay. Like same town, or...?

AK: Same town, and probably six or eight blocks away from one another.

TM: Okay. So in 1956, you'd be 14; you woulda been in junior high, high school?

AK: I think I was in eighth -- probably eighth grade.

TM: Okay. And did you like school?

AK: I loved school.

TM: What were your favorite classes?

AK: My favorite was -- well, in junior high, it was ancient history. In high school, it was math.

TM: Wonderful; nice. So this tragedy happened in the middle of the summer, end of June. And I'm assuming you weren't in summer school?

AK: I was not in summer school.

TM: You would've been 14 then, roughly. How did you first hear about the collision between these two airplanes?

AK: I woke up in the morning, and I saw my Aunt Jean there. And she was my mother's sister; she is my mother's sister. And I said to Aunt Jean, "Where are my parents?" And Aunt Jean told me that Tom had been killed the night before... I still get too emotional. Tom had been killed the night before in a plane crash. And I know that they went there; they went over to see my cousin Mac. And what they did was, they called Doctor Donald Volpe. And they went to, to Mac's store, and they knocked on it; and I remember that much. And my Aunt Jean said, "Tom was killed in a plane crash." And I just remember... I kept reading the newspapers. And I kept reading, 'Three brief words on the brink of eternity: "We are going," was what the captain said.' And it was really sad! And my father used to have to truck me when I... When I flew, he would give me phenobarbital; and my father had a license, because my father was a dentist. And he had a license for all the narcotics and everything; so he would give me, he would give me phenobarbital when I took -- whenever I had to fly. And my father would always listen, and he knew what I was listening to; I was listening to the sounds of the engines. And I never really knew -- it wasn't until we had eighteen flights, or thirteen flights, in 21 days, in the Middle East; and that's when I finally got over my fear of flying.

But, it was, it was really, it was pretty awful. And I remember, I remember the family being so upset; and I don't recall if I went to the funeral, or the viewing, or not. I'm sure I did. But in those days, my parents didn't let me go to funerals. And so, I, maybe I didn't go. But then, then there was so much commotion -- and lawsuits. And my uncle, who was James Caiola. James Caiola was the attorney, and he got the second-largest lawsuit of anybody in the crash. The only person that got more was Ray Lasby. And I always remember Lasby's name because that was the name that my cousin was traveling with; he was the gentleman my cousin was traveling with. And I just remember Ray Lasby was from Haddonfield, New Jersey. And that was probably, probably 25 miles from my house.

TM: What do you remember about Tom? And Tom and Mac?

AK: They were very much in love. And my cousin Mac didn't talk about it very much. She never really mentioned the crash at all. And so whenever we went to see her -- we went to see her a lot -- and she

and my mother were very close. And so, they were just like daughter and mother. And then Jerry and I went to see my cousin Mac, toward the end there, when she was alive; and she passed away when she was 85. And we went to see her a lot.

TM: Do you have any recollections of Tom at all?

AK: Tom, I remember, was just very handsome. He was just a very quiet, engineering type; and I don't have a lot of recollection of Tom. Because I was young, at the time; and so, it really wasn't so much in the top of my mind. But I remember -- I always remember my saying to my aunt, "Where are my parents!" And she said -- my Aunt Jean said to me, "Tom was killed last night in a plane crash." And that's about all I remember.

TM: Did you, then, go over to the house that day? Do you remember the next time you saw Mac after the crash?

AK: I think my mother probably went a lot more than I did; probably right after the crash. But it was pretty awful.

TM: Can you remember -- I'm looking through my notes here -- who was it, that was in the family, that was the lawyer?

AK: My, on my mother's side of the family, she had a sister that married Uncle Jimmy. And they were also my godparents. And so, my cousin Mac had become very friendly with Uncle Jimmy, in there -- for everything! And I think that Uncle Jimmy just took care of everything for Mac. I remember that he took -- as much of the money that he got -- and put it all in preferred stocks and bonds; to make sure that they wouldn't lose anything. And that was Uncle Jimmy's primary objective.

TM: What do you remember about him?

AK: My Uncle Jimmy? Oh! I remember him very, very well. He was my godfather, and his wife was my godmother, and that was from baptism. And we just did a lot of things together. We had, we went to -- my uncle had a boathouse -- and we went there a lot; and we fished, and we did a lot. And, Uncle Jimmy was just great; he was really terrific. And so when my cousin Mac said she was gonna hire him, she did the right thing at the time. And my uncle was a criminal attorney; so, he filed in as many courts as he was able to, to understand, in those days. And my uncle just did, he did a terrific job for my cousin Mac.

TM: This was new litigation at the time.

AK: It was certainly new litigation.

TM: What do you remember about that?

AK: Ah. I don't remember a lot, except my cousin went to see Uncle Jimmy and he -- and, you know, the strangest thing is, I threw out all his notes. He had written all sorts of notes, from the, from the lawsuit; and Tommy had tried to ask my cousin. But after 25 or 30 years, they just purged everything in the office. But I just recall that Uncle Jimmy said that he wanted my cousin to save the money that she got, and to put it into safe securities. And so I know when Tom got older, he -- when he was 21, he took a lot of the money out of the preferred stocks and bonds. But it was his to decide.

TM: Absolutely, absolutely. Today, in a new century, we have people specifically trained in grief counseling, and after-action debriefing. Was there anything like that for you, as a 14-year-old who knew people involved? Was there anything like that, that you remember?

AK: No, there wasn't any kind of grief counseling or anything, that I recall.

TM: How did you personally process your loss?

AK: Personally, I had, I did it with drugs; and with frequent flying. My family, the first time we flew to Florida was about three years after the crash, and I kept listening, and listening, and listening. And my father just knocked me out, so I could go to sleep. And so, but there was no grief counseling, nothing of that sort. So, it was tough; it was really tough. And, I loved my cousin so much; my cousin Mac. So much that, that I just, I just kept talking to her -- and she didn't mention it. But I just remember that we had many, many conversations about, about stuff, with my family... My parents, my parents -- and my mother and father were so good. And they listened to me, and as I said, my father has a license to prescribe drugs, so he gave them to me.

TM: What was Mac like? Can you describe her?

AK: Well, I got to know her more as she got older. And she remarried a second time; and I always remember her saying that there's nothing like your first marriage, as she said. And I just, I didn't like the guy she married, very much. But she was very sweet; she was very kind. And she was always there for me. And I look at myself in the mirror and I think, oh my gosh, I'm looking like my cousin! So, she was a wonderful lady; she was really wonderful. And what I remember about her, was her sweetness and her kindness, and how she always worried about everybody in the family. And she always worried about everybody.

TM: When you visited with her, in her later life, in her 70s and 80s, did she ever talk about those days?

AK: Never, never. She never mentioned it.

TM: Was her second husband still alive then?

AK: They had gotten divorced. Yeah.

TM: Yeah, you think about who needed counseling like that. Woulda been people like Mac.

AK: Yeah, she should've had some counseling. And certainly she should have had it after her second husband, because none of us liked him very much. And I remember my parents saying, he always wanted to get these big cars, and he always -- he had a love for bigness. And I think he saw my cousin as a meal ticket.

TM: Okay. What did he do? Cause Mac wouldn't have worked, I'm just assuming. That's an assumption on my part, based on the times, back in the 50s and 60s.

AK: I don't remember what he did; I just can't remember. And he might've been retired, but they were older when they got married. It was probably 25, 30 years after that. After the accident.

TM: All right; okay. So you would've been 14, Tom Junior would've been...?

AK: He was either one and a half months, or three months, and I don't remember. I always remember my mother saying that she felt so sorry for Mac, that she had lost her husband and her mother, within three months. Yeah.

TM: Yeah, that'd be terribly difficult. What do you remember about Tom Junior as a child?

AK: Tom Junior! Oh, I remember him! He would insist on getting what he wanted, by throwing screaming fits on the floor. And I remember him...

TM: Seems like a normal child.

AK: Like a normal child, yeah; like a normal child. And...

TM: Did you babysit for him?

AK: No, I never did. But I can remember going to his house, and he used to sleep with his mother. And we, I think we always worried about that; that he always slept with his mother. But then he got very close to his grandfather; because his mother lived with his grandfather. And so, Tom really did a lot with his grandfather.

TM: I think it would make perfect sense, for both of them, to sleep together. Just given what they'd been through; it might have been real helpful for Mac, and for Tom.

AK: I think so, too. I think it was probably very important. So, I don't know; it was just a very strange occurrence, waking up in the morning and asking Aunt Jean, Where are my parents? Where are my parents? And that was the strangest part of the whole thing, for me. And then I was so afraid to fly. Oh my goodness, I was terribly, terribly afraid. And then, as I said, I got over it; when we had 12 or 13 flights in 21 days, in the Middle East, and that did it.

TM: What were you doing there?

AK: Vacationing. Yeah.

TM: The Middle East mega-tour, in a week or so, with tons of flying here and there.

AK: Well, we did it, it was 22 days, and...

TM: Okay, three weeks.

AK: ...it was three weeks; and we went -- I remember, I always remember seeing the pyramids in Egypt, of Giza and the Sphinx; the presentation at night. And then going to Beirut and seeing the beautiful girl who did this -- I can still remember her -- she did this perfect belly dance. And then I remember the cedars of Lebanon, and then I remember walking through the Mandelbaum Gate. And that was really scary, with all the troopers up; the military up with guns and everything. And so we walked through; and then we couldn't land, we couldn't fly from Israel to Istanbul. And so we had to, we had to go by way of Egypt; Egypt would take us. And so, and then I remember Istanbul, and I remember the Hagia Sophia Mosque, and the Blue Mosque. And I -- you know, just things that impress you, are things that you recall. And...

TM: What year was that? When you did that tour?

AK: 1966. It was right before the Six Day War. And we went into -- oh! One thing I recall, is that the tour guide told us, that if we can get in to Syria, if there are no skirmishes at the border, we will go into Damascus. And I remember doing that; we were very lucky.

TM: So you would've been 24. Your interest was in ancient history, and in math. Did you go to college?

AK: I did; I went to the University of Pennsylvania. And I graduated as a degree, with a degree from the Wharton School. And I was not, I was not allowed to major in corporate finance. Jerry always reminds me that I say I wasn't able to major in corporate finance; and I wasn't allowed to be a corporate finance major. I remember the professor being very Australian, and women in Australia had no rights at all, in those days. And so I recall that. And then I went to the Annenberg School, and got a master's in communication. And that's how I wound up in -- that's how I wound up running my own firm -- for many, many years: 35 years. And my husband Jerry went to law school. I told him; I said, Jerry, I'm gonna go to law school, and if the third time is my charm, I said, I'm gonna go; and so, he wound up going. And so I got the degrees mostly through him.

TM: All together, yeah. When you think back on that time now, in your teens, who inspired you at the time? Do you remember?

AK: It was my teacher, Ida Bern... Ida -- and she always would sign it, "Ida B. Bernkoff." And she was a Penn graduate, and she was the greatest math teacher I ever had. And I thought that -- I wanted to be like her. And I thought that if I could possibly major in math, I would major in math. But I was afraid, I was really afraid; I didn't think I had the intellectual capacity to do that. And so I wound up going to the

Wharton School, where everybody started out at the same time, at the same level at the same time. And Ida Bernkoff was just wonderful; she was my inspiration.

TM: What do you remember about her?

AK: I just remember that she was very strict; she was very no-nonsense when she gave the -- and she always gave examples of what she was teaching. And she always gave us extra credit; and I would do all the extra credit that I could possibly do. Yeah.

TM: Nice, nice. When was the first time you saw the Grand Canyon?

AK: 1963. And then I hadn't been there in, in -- gosh! I hadn't been there 'til this year! 'Til 2021. It had been a long, long, long time. And I remember -- I don't recall that my father or mother even mentioned it.

TM: In '63?

AK: In '63. Because it had been -- what? Nine years? Since the crash, and; I just don't remember it.

TM: Do you think that... I mean, just today, with my today's mind, I'm having a hard time kind of wrapping myself around 1956, 1963. Where it was almost like part of the healing, in quotes, was to forget it and move on.

AK: I think that's probably what we did. We forgot it and moved on. But I didn't fly for the first time until 1959. And that's when I had to be drugged.

TM: Yeah. Did you fly out, for the '63 trip to the Canyon? Or did you drive?

AK: No, we drove, we drove.

TM: From Jersey!

AK: From New Jersey, yes.

TM: In what kind of vehicle? Don't tell me a station wagon!

AK: No, it wasn't. It was a car; and we took my Aunt Anna with us. My mother had three unmarried sisters: Jean, Anna, and Josephine; and we took Aunt Anna with us. And Aunt Anna was the historian, and she was very interested in a lot of the monuments and the missions, and that sort of thing. But, I don't know, I think that part, that was part of the healing process.

TM: Okay. And you were going to California Coast? Where were you, from New Jersey...?

AK: We drove from New Jersey and we drove as far as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego, and then back.

TM: Quite the tour.

AK: Yeah. And I remember Route 66. And I remember, there was a town in Oklahoma, and I can't remember the name of it. But I always remember that. And I got some jewelry in, in some Mexican, some turquoise jewelry, in Mexico -- in New Mexico. Yeah, yeah.

TM: New Mexico; okay. So that was your -- you've only been to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon twice.

AK: Twice.

TM: And the first time was in '63 and the second was just this year...

AK: Just recently, with my cousin Tom Sulpizio. Who was able to show us the crash location, and the -- he talked a lot about the crash. And he always -- his conversation always got back to the crash scene. And it was tough listening to it. But I was able to remember it. But I always remember 'Three brief words on the brink of eternity.' I never forgot that.

TM: Is there anything else about the accident, the time, and the people involved, that I haven't asked you, that you want to tell me about?

AK: I don't -- you know, we talked about this, and we talked about whether my cousins were as aware of the crash as I was. And we're just not sure. Because nobody ever mentioned it, in the family. And I just think that was -- in those days, you just didn't talk about unpleasant things. And so I think that...
(Listens to the band.)

TM: I know. I'm sorry; I didn't think about it, but it's their time. And they get better as the year goes along, so it's easier for us to tolerate.

AK: Yeah, I know.

TM; Is there anything we've forgotten that I should be asking you about? And I'm gonna ask you again, just to make sure.

AK: I don't think so because I always remember waking up. And I remember the, my cousin Mac had called Uncle Jimmy, and Uncle Jimmy took care of everything for her, and forgot it. And the only other thing that Uncle Jimmy did was he... Oh! Do you remember the *New York Times* v. Sullivan? That was when my father was sued for saying something that he shouldn't have. Well, asking questions about -- some guy was, some guy was running against him. And they asked him if he had gotten, if he had, that he had failed out of school. And he said, No, I didn't. And then I caught the B.S. and the B.A. degree. And I said, Daddy, something's wrong with that. I said you can't graduate from one school and have a

B.S., and then another school and get a B.A. And here he was asked to leave school. So, yeah. And the *New York Times v. Sullivan* came out that you had to... My uncle was very much on top of the law, and the decisions that came up; and he saw the *New York Times v. Sullivan*, and that was you had to have, be able to prove actual malice, and it had to be fake. And they had the letter! So that was it. Yeah. Do you remember anything else?

TS: If I say anything, I'm going to have to sign. But I'll just correct the age.

TM: So, pull your chair up. So now we're going to bring in Tom Sulpizio Jr., who's bringing up his chair. He's been very quiet. I must commend him for, well, for that, which is wonderful. What would you like to add, Tom?

TS: I just want to clarify the age -- my age at the time. It was exactly 17 months.

TM: Okay. Thank you.

TS: Just for the record; that's important, okay. And the other thing for the record, that wasn't -- that my cousin Anne didn't mention -- which was that my mother and I moved into my grandfather's house. Which was a small bungalow, two bedroom. So, I was still an infant when the accident occurred, so I stayed in a crib for as long as I could stay in a crib. And then we had to build an extra room, in the house. Until that was finished, yeah, I had to bunk with my mother.

AK: You slept with your mom. Yeah.

TM: Makes sense.

TS: So just a little clarification there for the record.

TM: Something else I didn't ask you -- what were your mother's and father's names?

AK: My mother was Kathryn and my father was Charles.

TM: Did they have nicknames? Did they go by Kathy and Chuck, or...?

AK: No, no. My father was called "Doc." But not much; some people called him Doc; but the older people did. I'm thinking of the pharmacist, and Volpe, and Dr. Elliott, called my father Doc. But other than that...

TS: Anne mentioned Dr. Volpe; he would be a rare doctor these days, who did house calls. So he'd be considered a family doctor, or GP. So the only counseling my mother would ever talk about, and it triggered the memory, was that this Dr. Volpe went over to the house to treat my mother, for shock and emotional distress. And he was the family practitioner; he was our family practitioner at least until he retired about 1970-ish.

AK: Yeah, and then his son took over; and then his son was my mother's doctor -- family doctor.

TS: So Anne mentioned the archives of her Uncle James Caiola, and his son, who's also an attorney. And I had mentioned this in non-oral interviews with Tom Martin, that I've tried to retrieve their archives, because they conducted depositions to support the litigation; they conducted first-hand depositions of the various parties involved. And unfortunately, we don't have those documents, those notes. But I have correspondence between our family attorney and my mother. And I have those in that collection, which I'm going to be presenting the original documents to the Grand Canyon Special Collection, in the coming months.

TM: Great, wonderful.

AK: I can't remember anything else, Tom. That's about as much as I remember.

Tm: Well, with that, this will conclude Grand Canyon oral history interview with Anne Sceia Klein, and a little bit from Tom Sulpizio. Today is Thursday, September 23rd, 2021, and my name is Tom Martin. And along with the Flagstaff High School marching band, I'd like to thank you for this wonderful oral history.

AK: It's great. Thank you, you're welcome. Thank you for having me.

TM: Thank you for being here.

END of Anne Klein interview.