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### Margaret Hangan

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# Bridges that Carried Us Over Project

## Interview Summary

**Interviewee:**

Margaret Hangan

**Interviewer:**

Jennifer Tilton

**Interview Date:**

January 24, 2022

**Interview Location:**

Remotely via Zoom

**Length:**

00:55:02

**Interview Summary completed by:**

Makaley Montano, 2022.

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**Description:**

Margaret Hangan was born in 1962 into a vibrant family of activists and musicians. She shares stories of her father's move to Redlands in the 40s and her parents' experience as an interracial couple in Redlands during the 50s. She describes stories of growing up on the westside of San Bernardino and of her parents' experiences in the civil rights movement. Her father, Clabe Hangan, played an important role in the school desegregation protests in San Bernardino, and she describes the folk music scene, which was deeply connected to civil rights activity. Margaret Hangan describes her father, Clabe, as a charismatic man of many talents. He taught Black history at the Claremont colleges and was part of a music group known as Mutonic 4, who recorded albums and performed concerts at Penny University.

**Subject Topic:**

- San Bernardino (Calif.)
- Westside
- Claremont (Calif.)
- Redlands (Calif.)
- Education
- Activism
- Music

## Spatial Coverage:

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
Golden Ring	111 Harvard Place, Claremont
Grove House	Pasadena, CA
Penny University	166 S. Mt. Veron Ave, San Bernadino

## Temporal Coverage:

1940s - 1970s

## Key Events:

- Civil Rights Movement

## Key Organizations:

- University of California, Riverside
- Mutonic 4
- Second Baptist Church
- Penny University
- Redlands High School
- Upward Bound Program
- Freedom Schools
- Claremont Colleges

## Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
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Digital Video	00:05:10 – 00:08:24	Clabe Hangan's musical origins
Digital Video	00:08:24 – 00:12:18	Margaret Hangan's parents met while studying at the UofR and had a unique experience as an interracial couple
Digital Video	00:12:18 – 00:14:40	Memories of growing up in San Bernardino
Digital Video	00:14:40 – 00:16:26	Parents involvement in Civil Rights movement in San Bernardino in the mid 60s

Digital Video	00:16:26 – 00:19:58	Social and youth programs that her parents volunteered at and camps she attended for them
Digital Video	00:19:58 – 00:25:34	Detailed stories and description of Penny University
Digital Video	00:25:34 – 00:26:59	Her father and other community member's involvement with Freedom Schools
Digital Video	00:26:59 – 00:29:06	Experience with the school bussing system
Digital Video	00:29:06 – 00:32:27	Family moves to Montclair in '68; work and family dynamic begins to change significantly
Digital Video	00:32:27 – 00:37:17	The role of her father's charisma in activism, family, work, and music and his remarkable accomplishments
Digital Video	00:37:17 – 00:44:34	Family connection to Jim and Sally Thomas
Digital Video	00:44:34 – 00:48:54	Continuities and changes witnessed overtime in the Inland Empire
Digital Video	00:48:54 – 00:55:03	Reflection on the lessons learned from living through the Civil Rights Movement as a child and the Black Lives Matter movement as an adult

**Related Materials:**

Additional oral history interviews are available from the Wilmer Amina Carter Foundation's "Bridges that Carries Us Over Project" on CSUSB ScholarWorks, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/>.

**Full interview transcript can be found below.**

## Interview Transcript

### Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:00:04] OK, so we're here today talking with Margaret Hangan for the Bridges that Carried us Over archive. It is January 24th, 2022 and thank you so much for coming to talk about your father, Clabe Hangan and his history. As well as your own memories of growing up in the Inland Empire.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:00:23] My pleasure.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:00:24] All right. So we usually start out asking people to say and spell their whole name, so we make sure right in the record,

**Margaret Hangan** [00:00:32] My full name is Margaret Helen Hangan. Spelling, first name is M-A-R-G-A-R-E-T. Helen, H-e-l-e-n. Hangan, H-A-N-G-A-N.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:00:49] Great, thank you. So let's start since we're really interested in hearing stories of your father. Let's start with anything you know about how the Hangan family first moved to Redlands.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:01:01] Actually, I do know. I've done a lot of genealogy work on this. So my, my father, my father's parents moved to Redlands from Southern Arkansas, Foremen Arkansas, specifically right about the early part of World War II. As you know, Redlands was big in the in the citrus interests industry at that time, and I believe that my grandfather actually did work in the citrus industry. So they moved. I'm not exactly sure what year they moved, I'm thinking it was like '43 around that point. Because my mother's family moved from Kansas around that same time also, so I probably getting a little the dates a little confused. But they they moved with. So my my father Clabe and his brother, Cesar, were both born in Arkansas, and so they moved the whole family. Well I know that my grandfather, John Hangan, um I'm pretty sure he worked in the citrus industry, and I'm not exactly sure what he did. My grandmother, Artomia A-R-T-O-M-I-A Hangan. Her maiden name is Gholston, G-H-O-L-S-T-O-N. She she moved here. I think she was a domestic part of the time. Apparently, they actually managed a at one point or another. They managed a boarding house, apartment house. I actually still have some documents associated with leases on that, and it was basically located where Trader Joe's is located now around in that area, according to my father. So apparently they that they did, you know, they did odd things when they got to California. They did not last. I'm not entirely sure when they divorced, but they did divorce. My grandmother remarried and so did my grandfather. So I'm thinking, yeah, around round that around that period.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:03:12] Interesting. And so your dad, then how old was he when he came to Redlands, do you think?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:03:17] Let's see. He was while his birth was always in question or in the year, his birth was always in question, my grandmother kind of blurred that. That's a family

story. He was probably born about 1932-33 around that point. So they came in in the 40s, he would have been about 10 or 11 years old.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:03:38] Yeah. And did he ever tell you? Memories of when he was a kid growing up in that neighborhood in Redlands?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:03:45] Not a whole lot. To be honest, we didn't ask him a whole lot about it. I do know that he and his brother, Caesar, were very active in athletics. And if you go through the high school Redlands High School yearbooks from the years they were in high school, they're all over for their athletics ability. And I do know that they were active in the church. They were members of the church. They were active (in the singing choir) and then and then I'm sorry, Clarence. And then they. I do know that their parents lived in different locations. So they were they basically moved between the two parents. I think they were. They did. They were fairly independent on their own, doing a lot of their own stuff, going to school, moving between their two parents. I know my father. I mean, Redlands had a very large Hispanic community at that time, and my father learned to speak Spanish on the street because his friends were Mexican descent. And he absolutely did pick up and had and actually spoke conversational Spanish from his. I think probably from his playmates with his friends. So that's about all I know of his childhood.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:05:03] Yeah. Now, do you know anything about how he got into singing because he became quite the musician?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:05:10] Yeah, he did. Well, he. I think it ran in the family. His father actually played the guitar and used to sing. And my sister probably has a better sense of this. Or my mother actually would know. Because she and she and my dad's father, John, used to come by the house when we lived in San Bernardino and hang out with my mom and tell her stories. So she probably has a better sense of this, if anybody. But she apparently they used to have these in-house clubs or in the in an area they called the bottoms that he used to go play. And apparently he played. He played guitar and he I don't I'm probably totally self-taught. So I mean, that's part of it. But his mother, Artonia, she also she actually started playing guitar late in life or not guitar, a piano. She actually picked up piano late in life. She used to play at the church. And then, of course, the very big, you know, the churches also had a big music program and music ministry, so he got very much involved with the music ministry of his church, which is where the Mutonic 4 came out of. So I think, you know, the combination of all that is is what kind of led him into music.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:06:28] Yeah, yeah. When you said your grandfather used to play in the bottoms, do you know anything about where that was?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:06:35] No, I don't. If I presume in Arkansas in southern Arkansas, just around the Foremen area, because that's where he was. He was he was not born there. He was actually born in Prescott, Arkansas. But his mother, Molly, moved the family down to the Foreman area, right about 19... After he was born, so I would say must've been around 1901 or so. Between 1901 and 1905 when they ended up down in that part of Arkansas.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:07:12] And so he sort of played in in small places. There, and ...

**Margaret Hangan** [00:07:17] I think he picked it up. I think it's like playing music, especially in the church in that part of Arkansas. I think a lot of people probably just played instruments they picked up, you know?

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:07:29] Yeah. And did your dad tell you any stories about the pastor at the church who I think helped form that first Mutonic four group?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:07:38] I don't remember. I know a little bit of him. I don't. I was pretty young, so I don't remember a lot. My sister probably has a better memory of him. My mother definitely does. So I do know he was very influential and I do know that he, you know, he was definitely a mentor to some degree on the music and to my father, I just I don't even have a memory of him other than we have a stool that was built by him, that it was my sisters and I still have it. We had it as kids. But other than that, I don't really have a memory of him at all.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:08:14] That's a cool. That's a cool thing to have though. Yeah. So now your dad, I think you said, went to the U of R at some point right after?...

**Margaret Hangan** [00:08:24] Yeah, he did. My parents, that's where my parents met and they were there at the early 50s. I don't believe that he actually got a degree at the UofR. There were both sociology students. And I'll leave it to my mother to talk about the details of how they met and et cetera. But I do know that they were there together and that they are both into sociology. They're both in sociology. I'm thinking that they were married by, I think, 1955. So I think my mother had actually graduated. But before they married so I'm assuming that it was around the early fifties to say that they had met that in that he went to college, therefore is growing up in Redlands. If they weren't there, I think he took some courses at UCR, which I'm thinking UCR, where he actually got his B.A.. I could be wrong, but I do know he did take courses at UCR or at UofR.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:09:26] yeah. Now I'll ask your mom as well, of course. But yeah, but did they ever share stories about what it was like as an interracial couple in Redlands?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:09:36] Oh yeah, I got some of that out of my mother. I mean, she, you know, I'm going to leave her to talk about that, but I do. I can tell you that they, you know, they went through stuff. There's no question about that. And I know she could talk about this, but I will tell you that I didn't find out until this year that they had actually originally married in Mexico because it wasn't, you know, the mixed race marriages didn't become legal in the state of California until 1948. You were ruling a cowboy Supreme Court ruling. And so I think, you know, I I think by by the time they married, it was still so new that they chose not to do it in the U.S. They went to Mexico, and I found this out by looking at Ancestry.com of all places because their actual marriage certificate in the U.S., they didn't do that until 1958. I see. And I happened to come across that marriage certificate. This all came about a few weeks, actually a couple months ago. So I'm like, OK, mom explain. I knew my sister was born before that. So that's basically what what happened, and I suspect that they didn't want to challenge the the the system, you know, in terms of getting an actual permit to marry. Yeah.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:11:04] So yeah. And so by the time you were born, they had moved to San Bernardino. Do you know why they moved to San Bernardino and left Redlands?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:11:13] I do not know the answer to that. I presume that had to do with work because my mother did go to work for the county as a social worker and my father went to work as a probation officer. So my guess is that it was location, you know, to their to their employment areas. So my father? I don't know how long you as a probation officer for, but I do know that he did do that. My mom would know. And then my mom worked for the county and the adoption and later in adoption that general social work, I think right up until the early 70s when she finally decided to become a masseuse Yeah. So but she knew that, and my father, I think, continued to go also was going to school and was doing music all at the same time. Yeah, yeah.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:12:06] And what are your early memories of? So when were you born?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:12:09] Roughly 1962.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:12:11] OK? 62. So what are some of your early memories growing up in San Bernardino? And where did you guys live? What was it like?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:12:18] Well, you know, I can't remember the street where we lived. My sister and mom can tell you right off the top of their head. We did. As I said, we lived in the black side of town. You know, this is before our fair housing. And as I said, there were upper middle class. Our neighbors next door were definitely middle class. Middle class versus is that we were not necessarily ever middle class. But you know, my point is is that you had a variety of people living in that area from different economic backgrounds because that's the only place to live. I do know they live in another location before they move to the ones that I grew up that I remember. We were there until 1968. But it was. I do recall a few things that I recall about living there because I was in 68, I was 7 when we moved. So I have some vague memories of our neighbors, the kids that we played with in the neighborhood. I have some vague memories of a house parties. My parents invited. My father was very active in the Outward Bound program and Anytown USA program. They had a lot of time with young college students and other people, like minded people who were interested in folk music and civil rights and all that stuff. So it was not unusual for us to have people coming over from all walks of life and as kids, you know, because most parents or were young families. They were young parents. You had young kids. And so we kids but all play together and then we'd all be put to bed in the same room while the parents were up all night, you know, playing music. So I do have memories of that, waking up in the morning and the smell of wine and stale cigarettes in the morning. And, you know, because they were up all night playing. So I do do have those types of memories there, but they are fleeting.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:14:24] Yeah, yeah. So what did your parents? We talked about this a little bit, but how did your parents and particularly your dad and mom, get involved in the civil rights movement in San Bernardino as it kind of grew in the mid 60s?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:14:40] Yeah. Well, they had no choice. I mean, look at their marriage. They really had no choice but to get involved. And I think really because of the fact that, you know, here they had mixed race kids and they needed to try to make up a world where their kids could live in. So I really do think that, you know, so much of the civil rights movement was also folded into the folk music scene. And I do think there was a lot of bleed. There was a lot of bleed over and. And so much of that folk music helped to lead marches and were part of the, you know, it was all it was all intertwined. So I do think that that that was, you know, that



they just really had no choice but to get into that new as a way to as a way to to fight for their own relationship and their kids. So I don't have a sense in my in my mind as to when they were not doing that. As far as I'm concerned, that is how we were raised was in that it was in that milieu. So I do have some early memories of marches. I have early memories of I have lots of memories of concerts, lots of memories of going to the Penny University. I sent you that information on that, seeing lots of performers there, lots of other types of events. So, you know, they're they're fleeting, but I do have those those kinds of memories. But I just that was just kind of what we did.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:16:14] Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know they're fleeting because you know you're a kid, but it's neat from a kid's perspective. What's what is some of those fleeting memories of of the marches to start with that, you might remember?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:16:26] I was still young the only march I actually remember. I mean, I remember as I remember people talking about them and I remember my dad taking me the one. I think he didn't have a babysitter and apparently I got sick, so I actually threw up. So that's probably the reason why I remember it is because I got sick and I think my dad was suppose to help lead it and I got sick, you know, all that stuff. So it's part of a reason why I remember it when the other members I speaking of civil rights that actually slightly the other one of the other memories I remember as we were there when the Renaissance Fair opened up in [unclear] the famous Renaissance Faire that used to be at the hills in Malibu that opened up in the late 60s. We were there. That's another early memory. My father went and played the black boar. And it was kind of a very much of a hippie hangout in those days. It still is still goes. But we were there the first few years. So but I mean, those are the kinds of things that we got, did you know? And then I do have memories of going up north to like Mount Shasta, the area to go to camp. My father was involved with the Outward Bound. And Anytown USA I have a real young, very early memory, my mother was kind of a nurse at the camp that we went to. So, you know, these were programs to bring interest in inner-city black youth out to the outdoors and get them exposed to people of other cultures and stuff. So, you know, it was another... He was very, very much involved in that program. And I do have an early memory of being at Mount Shasta, at a camp. I think they were had a bonfire. My mother was the nurse and my father had gone off. I think he'd gone off to go collect firewood for the bonfire. But you know, we had this huge Mt. Shasta volcano and I was convinced that he was going to fall at that volcano. So I remember this very upset that my father was gone. It was going to fall into a volcano as a child. So but I think those are probably the bulk. I mean, I probably was about four or five years old. I do know when we traveled up north, we would go up the coast and stop in places like Carmel and Monterey, where we had family, friends who were there, who were also involved in the movement. You know, as I said, Mimi Baez and Joan and all those folks were there in Carmel and then other folks who want to pray. And then we go to the Bay Area, where they had Padres of friends who were also involved in the movement. And we visit them on our way up to, you know, the Northern California to do these events and then coming back. So, you know, there was a constant exposure to a lot of people and a lot of, you know, coming from a lot of different backgrounds. And I still remember hippies standing at the one and only stoplight in Santa Barbara, and there'd be about five people deep trying to get a ride up the coast. So I do. I do have those kinds of memories.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:19:49] Yeah, yeah. Now tell me a little bit about what Penny university was and was like from your perspective and your dad's involvement in that space.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:19:58] Yeah Penny University was it was a coffee house. And if you look, if you Google Penny University, apparently this is a British tradition, they said, which I had no idea growing up. I just happened to look it up. And the term Penny University is, and I think it is literally like you give a penny for a cup of coffee or something like that. I think that's what it comes out up. So John Ingro, John and Olaya Ingro, it said John Ingro was a judge in San Bernardino, and they are the ones who started it again in some ways. But something my mother could talk a little bit more about she, probably she knew them better than I did. And so it was it was in two locations. This was, you know, it was a coffee house, it was it was a constant. I guess they had shows most every every weekend, plus hootenanny, which of course, was the big thing in those days. My father was one of the main players there, and you saw on the Facebook page for the Penny University all those fliers from all their concerts monthly. This is who's going to be here. You'll see my dad's name is all over it. Along with Sally Thomas, who was also the Thomas family was a big. They were contemporaries and my parents and family friends, so I practically grew up with their kids. So they were they were basically the locals and and were always, you know, there are no known as local performers. But I think that that places that, you know, a lot of people with through there too Rosalie Sorrels was came through there, Sam Hinton came through there. You know, some of the early folks came through there their way and then there was a circuit of these clubs. So there was one in Claremont the Golden Ring, which is in Claremont. And then there is one. I sent you the thing and there was one in Laverne. You had the Grove House in Pasadena. You have, you know, all these and there is a network of them all over Southern California. And I think you probably these are places all of the local Southern California musicians just, you know, circled around and played. So and I know my father played it. A lot of these

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:22:22] and these were all sort of folk music centers that were. Intentionally also kind of interracial and movement oriented in some way.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:22:32] No, not necessarily not intentionally interracial, it was just open to the public. It was just a place to house or to highlight their folk music. Music is in the late 1950s, there was a huge revival of folk music and it and so that, yeah, I think this was just a culmination of these coffeehouses where a culmination out of that time period and creating a place where people who were interested in that music to to gather so that. So you also had the folk music societies, so you had the one here in San Bernardino, there was one and Riverside, which I think still exists. So that was and they used to promote concerts and they would, you know, and they'd have a lot of the folks would come together and do these concerts. And of course, there are lots of them. Some of the music that they that they would perform were a lot of these these songs that were very prominent civil rights movement. So labor folk songs, associate with labor movements and other types of movements. So these were very popular at the time. And also the one thing that was really popular to do any more is that everybody participated in this music. So it was very much a participating process where people, you know, they had people singing and directing, but the audience was a part of participating in the whole event. So. That was, you know, there was all sorts of opportunities to to to be involved in in that music scene, but also to go to concerts then and then gather with like minded people, which is where that comes up with the civil rights movement. Something else that he did think about during the civil rights movement in San Bernardino is that it wasn't just black people who were involved. In fact, a good chunk of the folks that we associated with were white, young white families who were very much involved and wanted a new way of of the future for their kids. And so, you know, again, it was it was in fact, especially in the folk music scene. It was very much of a multiracial, multicultural group

of people who were behind all this. So, you know, although it absolutely reflects black history in San Bernardino, that civil rights movement was actually multicultural.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:25:10] Yeah, yeah, certainly. I know some of the early organizations like Core, which was founded in in sixty three, I think, you know, intentionally began as a multiracial space bringing together. And so, yeah, that is part of the part, an important part of the story. Yes. Now your dad, I know, ended up somehow as the principal of the freedom schools.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:25:34] I had no idea how that happened. So I do now and someone you may want to talk with and I can get you a contact number. Another one of the teachers was a guy named Jim Thomas, and his kids are still around and they were older and may have a memory of this. But my sister, I talked to her. She didn't have a whole lot of memories. It was really about high school kids. And we were too young for that. So knowing, my father being quite the person with quite the charisma from hell. Excuse me, but it's true. The man, the man he walk, he walked in the room and people knew he was there. I'm not the least bit surprised that he ended up being there because just he was just that kind of a lightning rod. I don't know. You know, I don't know any much more about the organization, but I do know that I don't necessarily think it lasted all that long. But still it it. They made a point. And I and I think the point was heard, says by 1968, my sister and I were being bussed. So, but I don't really have too much of a memory of it other than the fact that I knew that it happened, right?

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:26:53] And do you have any memories of that experience of bussing? So where did you get kind of shifted to school?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:26:59] My sister and I got bussed bus to Waterman, actually must have been by 1967. Excuse me, we got we got bused to Waterman and. I'm not sure how that came about, my mother could probably talk a little bit about that, but I do know and it would be good to talk to her about the effects of that because and my sister, because I was in kindergarten when that happened. So it was my first year of school, my sister, on the other hand, was already in fifth or sixth grade, I think fifth grade and it was a bit of a transition because she went from the neighborhood school that served the black community to this community, this school that served the white community and frankly, the education levels were different. And so she really struggled because she could barely according to my mother and I would definitely fault with her. But according to my mother, she was doing academically. She would do very well in the local school, and then she went to this new school and it really was a struggle for her. So I think that's something that affected her for the rest of her life. It frankly. And just because of the disparity in the level of education between the two schools. But we know we were bussed that year and I think I must've been about '67 now. I think about when we moved in 68, we moved in August of 68, so it may have been the school year just prior to that. But I remember going and I remember as a kid, just, you know, loving it and I didn't know anything. I didn't know any different. It was my first year. And I remember being on the bus and driving was funny because I've driven that highway since to Wateman school, and actually I do have a memory of being on that and in the bus driving and it raining and I do have a memory of actually being bussed over there. I don't remember where we picked up the bus or anything like that, but I do remember being on the bus.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:29:01] Yeah, yeah. And where did you move after nineteen sixty eight?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:29:06] We moved to Montclair. My father got a position that I believe we got a position that the Claremont colleges are teaching black history. And he also was in it as a graduate student. And so he we moved in 68. Yeah, to Montclair, and I think my mom continued to work as a social worker. At this point, I think she got her off the Fontana I remember correctly. But yeah, we we we moved in the McClair just off where just between Mills and Montclair Mall. So we moved into a house that my parents knew people who owned it, and they eventually bought it. And my mom sold it just a few years ago. She was in that house well into the 40s, well for four years. But my parents, they. So we moved in 68. My parents divorced in 72. So then another child, younger brother, who was born soon after we moved. And then my parents divorced in 72. And that's the year that my father got started in Music Americana, which which I knew it was 72 or about that time, which was a an education program that he and a friend of his named Joe Rael started. And the whole idea was that they were using folk music so you as an as an education tool. And they did programs at Elementary and high school and, you know, and schools all up and down the state. So he did that right up until he could no longer perform, which was not long before we passed in 2008. Wow. Yeah. So he did that for years. That was his main source of income.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:31:04] And did he teach black history more as well?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:31:07] He thought he taught Black History at the Claremont colleges, and I don't know when he stopped doing that. He never finished his masters. So I don't I don't know exactly what happened there, but I do know that. Yeah, he did, yeah, he he didn't go much farther than that. I don't think he taught more than a few years after we got there.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:31:35] Perhaps he loved music more.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:31:37] Yeah. And also, you know, he only he can speak to this. But I suspect that he went off to a masters degree because he felt he should do that and not necessarily because he was something he really wanted to do or he wasn't sure. You know, when you're when you're as charismatic as he was, and very well-spoken as he was. I think the expectation is that he would go on into academia without necessarily. Is that what him having that, you know? Yes. So I'm I'm wondering if the expectations were put on him versus this is something that he wanted himself.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:32:13] Right. So tell me a little bit more about your dad as a person. You said he was super charismatic. I mean, what are some sort of stories that would help bring him to life in your memory?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:32:27] Well, as I said, yeah, he was clearly and the charisma from hell. He really did. And you know, he he managed to be really relevant despite, you know, throughout most of his career as a musician, either as a solo artist or he oftentimes took on partners. He had various partners throughout his career. So he not only did the music Americana is kind of a business, but he also continued to do music on the side. And late in his life, he was part of a group called the Hangan Brothers that actually produced a CD. A couple of CDs, my sister sang on that, ect. I think that my father, you know, being a musician as he was being a very much and he was very much and a solo artist, ect. He was very, very. How do I put it? A little self-absorbed let's put it that way. You know, and he had to be different what he did for a living he actually did. And I think he tried very hard to be a lot of things for a lot of people, but it wasn't necessarily always equipped to know how to do that. He couldn't

say no, which sometimes meant he overextended himself. But he had a lot of strong friendships and friends. You know, somehow or other, they always made people feel like they're his best friend. Or there is, you know, he was that kind of charisma and it made people feel good about themselves when we talk to them. So I think I think he was curious. I think he had a lot of interests, a lot of willing to get out and do things. Alternatively, but he got very interested in alternative medicine, whose career late in his life, he got very interested in financial planning late in his life. He got very, you know, he he was always learning new things and was always very curious person. He lived live very simply. He didn't require a lot of a lot of stuff. He wasn't really materialistic. He had a very simple lifestyle, which he had to given the fact that he was self-employed. Yeah. So but he he had bought after my parents divorced in 72, eventually bought a home in Pomona just off Aero. So just outside of Claremont lived there until he died in '08. And that became his base of operations. Pretty much. Yeah, my parents. My. My parents split us up, so my my father actually is the one who raised my brother up for later in life. My parents and then my mom continued to raise me. By the time they had divorced my sister was pretty much moved out of the house, so we were five and seven years apart. So my father was basically the be adult male adult, my brother and my mother was with me. And so if by that point we didn't really spend much time with my father, by that point I was a little older and so I didn't really spend a whole lot of time with him. So, you know, he but he had a very full life and doing a lot of, you know, he did a lot of stuff that I would never necessarily always aware of it because I think that's who that's who he was and that's what he did. And he didn't think anything of it much to let people know about it. So so but I do think that, you know, he he was he did manage to accomplish quite a few things, but he managed to do what he had love to do and make a living at it and figure out a way to make a living at it, which is it is really a remarkable accomplishment because there's a lot of people who get into the music and get out and do their jobs or whatever and never figure out how to actually make a living, doing what, doing music. And he actually managed to do that.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:36:44] Yeah, and that's clearly what he loved. So that's that's so yeah. Yeah. You've mentioned a couple names as you've kind of got along. And and I'd love to know just a little bit more about them. So Sally Thomas, Sally,

**Margaret Hangan** [00:36:58] Sally, Thomas, yeah, Jim and Sally Thomas. They were there was a cadre of musicians. I think I sent you that flyer for the Messengers. Mm hmm. So this wasn't the end. I don't know. Clarence talked about them or not,

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:37:15] A little but I'd love some more. Yeah, yeah, OK.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:37:17] So they created it in and get back into music as part of civil rights. Apparently, what they they created this kind of super group for lack of a better word, and I don't know how long their existence. I think a few years that was made up of the MuTonic 4 for Sally, Thomas and Keith and Rusty McNeil. And they would travel as a group and would go out and give performances as a group of mixed race groups starting in the early 1960s. And I think they did that purposely because they wanted to stand for something. So, so. And then they are. And then they they created a bond and a friendship, especially the Thomas', the McNeil's and my father that continued throughout their lives. So as children, when they were having these house parties and all these musicians playing and all this stuff. It was the Thomas kids and the the McNeil kids and us. And then the other kids, we were all we were, all we all played together and we were all put together. And so we have early memories of them. Sally continued to perform for most of her life. She and her husband Jim.

Jim was involved early on, but he actually was an educator. He was involved in the in the freedom school. So and his eldest son, Scott, might have some and we can I can hook you up with names so he might have some memories of that. So and then Sally, Sally continued to perform, and I think she is giving in to a day job or a paralegal, I'm thinking or something or a legal office that she could do perform at the folk music, at Penny University, etc. The McNeil's, they also continue to perform, and they basically did the same thing my father did, I think they actually mcneil's. My father started out together doing the education and music piece, and then McNeil's went on to actually do their own thing. They they bought a bus and park their kids at five kids, and they traveled the country doing this, and they actually produced CDs, which the folk music, by the way, had. And they continued to do this. I guess, you know, as a way to make a living. Keith McNeil apparently went early on in his career he used to work for Southern California Edison. I think it was. And you know, these young, these young families, one of the things that they were trying to do at this time was to figure out other ways to make a living and raise their families without being involved in the system. So I think that's another reason why they kind of bonded together now, the music, but they're young and they had kids and they were just trying to figure out how to how to survive and not buy into the system. So apparently, yeah, I think he's left his job with Edison and he and rusty somehow or other, we're able to figure out how to make the music work also. So they did a very similar thing to my father. And they were all lifelong friends. So, you know, keep in rest. You were always a part of somehow or other part of our lives as we grew up or later on in life. Not so much, but you know, as far as I was concerned, they were always the McNeil's and the Thomas' were always kind of a second or third set of parents and their kids. Even to day we all we are all connected still, even though we all grew up and did our own thing. We still we still feel kind of connected to each other.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:41:20] Kind of like your cousins?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:41:22] Yeah, yeah. In a way, yeah. Scott Thomas, Thomas's daughter Ashley calls my sister and I the aunties. Even though we're not, we're not. But you know, that's that's how that's that's how it is with that. We are just family. That's all there is to it. But so they were a part of that. I said that. There were others, but those are the ones that I remember near the most. There were definitely other people who were involved and my sister and my mother, we talk more about that. You know, either they were musicians or they were in the civil rights movement, you know, and that's where Frances comes in and my mother, my mother and Frances were buds. I mean, they were really good friends at one point or another. And so I think my mom was was involved with with what Frances was doing at some point. And my mom at one point or another was then she actually she told me she told that my mother should. So she when they were walking down the street, she was, Oh yeah, I used to. She said she used to publish articles that I think in the Press Enterprise on adoption, or it was a black newspaper, not the press enterprise, but in a black newspaper (Precinct reporter). Yeah, so she used to publish articles in there under a nom de plume. She didn't remember what the name was, but she used to publish articles and in there on on adoption. One of these days goes back through to see if I'd find it, but the point is this is, you know, they it was just this, this kind of people who were involved in different either in the vogue mechanics thing or in the civil rights thing or. And then and then as we moved on through the mid 60s, then the war came in. So of course, everybody was against the war that had caused this. And then Cesar, the Cesar Chavez, you know, I can't I can't tell you how long it took me before I eat lettuce and grapes. And yeah, yeah, yeah. All that, all that whole group, all of those folks, you know, they were involved in some aspect of those movements.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:43:34] Right, right. Do you remember as a kid if Art Townsend was part of the networks your parents were into? He was the reporter, the publisher of the Precinct reporter.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:43:45] I don't. I don't remember his name, but my father, my my sister might also be my sister, especially has got a steel trap when it comes today. I'm terrible at them, but she actually, yeah, he's got a good memory for names.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:44:01] Yeah, awesome, awesome. You know, I wonder, you know, you've lived, you know your dad more so, but you too. You've lived through all those movements you were just talking about, right? As a young person and seen a lot of changes in this region of the Inland Empire. Yeah, I guess I wonder sort of what are the big changes you feel like you've seen in the Inland Empire over your lifetime? You don't live here anymore, but you've seen a lot. Your mom's still here. Yeah.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:44:34] And I actually did live in Redlands again and starting at ninety four, so I actually did live from 94 to about 95. I think. When I went off to graduate school in '96. I actually lived in my grandmother's house which my dad owned. Well, actually it was at my grandfather's house that he moved his wife into his second or third wife and she died and married. Yeah. Anyway, the point is, by the way, my grandfather's house, his original house in Redlands, was destroyed when they put in the house on the freeway. So he yeah, so he was one of those that was displaced, replaced when they put in I10. Anyway, and then the house that he owned, the property that he was given and his house on that. That's what I lived in. When I was there in the 90s, it was

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:45:27] the same house, but it had moved

**Margaret Hangan** [00:45:29] locations. Well, not the same house. Now they destroyed that house. But, you know, back in the day, you paid to buy a house that had been moved from the property and moved onto the property. People do that all the time, so that's what they did. They had moved a house, they bought a house and moved it on a piece of property, which there was another house underneath it. Now I'm an archeologist, so of course I'm going to see all that burnt stuff in the previous house because that's what I do. And

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:45:59] Where was that house that he moved to, where was that?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:46:02] It was on uh... Gosh you'd think I know, my sister still knows it now. And I'm blanking on the name, I'm blanking on the street, but it's over near the it's over near the Stater Brothers. And my grandfather actually rented a house around the corner from there because of the changes I might say about. I don't look much like perceptions as to what it is now. It's really tough to say in terms of changes because, you know, I have vague memories of the Inland Empire and San Bernardino and having lived there in Redlands in the early 90s, you know? I don't know that. Other than the fact that it had exploded in terms of development, I don't think that's probably the biggest change because I still remember the orange groves and the grape vines, and I still remember the smell of the orange blossoms, the lemon blossoms and all those things that I still remember that the ag fields line with with the eucalyptus and the smell of eucalyptus on a hot summer day when the winds kicked in, and that was a real, distinct smell. So I do still have those memories. In terms of the

community as a whole, I really don't have a memory other than knowing that I can identify some places I've been to as a child. But I don't know other than just the explosion of population from what it used to be, that that is probably the biggest, biggest thing that I have a memory of. I do think that when things change, actually, it's kind of interesting, as my good friend of mine is now the Forest supervisor for San Bernardino and she's black. She was the first black supervisor of Forrest. If that doesn't say anything has changed, I don't know what does.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:48:08] She's a supervisor of what. I couldn't quite hear the word.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:48:10] San Bernardino national forest. Yeah, she's in charge of it.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:48:16] Right, right. That's a big change from the era of your parents, for sure.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:48:20] Oh yeah, yeah. Oh yeah, yeah. So I do think that, you know, you kind of lost that, that community, that liberal community that once was there in San Bernardino. That I do think has probably changed, but you know, that supported that folk music movement that supported those, those political movements, you know, as San Bernardino economically became pretty stretched. So that's about that, you know, that's about it. My only sense of it. Yeah.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:48:54] And just as a person who lived through that moment of that movement and then one question we've been asking a lot of people, we are living through another kind of racial reckoning and another sort of movement for racial justice. What's it like to live through this moment, having also experienced and have some memories of an earlier era and knowledge of your parents' participation in that?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:49:18] It's actually pretty interesting because I'm I... Two things, one is because of my involvement with my parents, I've been very involved in the Forest Service on diversity, inclusion movement and especially with the new administration coming in. The prior administration we couldn't say, diversity inclusion without getting in trouble. This new administration is really pushing it and I and being with the federal government, they actually do have a civil rights office. And so I've been very active in those programs as kind of a side job along with my archeology. And that comes out of having grown up and with parents who are civil rights activists. In terms of the movement that's happening right now, what's interesting is that one of those was really pushing my fellow employee. To recognize that they do have a role in what's happening right now, to recognize that we can do things within the agency and make somewhat of a leadership role in. By encouraging people to talk about their issues. Talk about the diverse issues we have internally with our own agency. You know, those types of things. A part of this is because I'm very comfortable in this place and because I grew up there. So to me, that's, you know, that's what I feel like. That's part of who I am. Having grown up in it, I do think that the younger people coming up, you know, they're beginning to discover what our, my parents went through. They're beginning to understand the sacrifices they made begin to understand how that's affected their lives because I think that they they don't necessarily understand. No, the other piece of that, though, is it kind of bothers me that we're having this still fight for this stuff because, you know, they they did a lot. They they really sacrificed a lot and for both good and bad. They absolutely sacrificed a lot in the end. You know, I was very fortunate that my parents were very functional and were able to



navigate through through being able to figure out how to stay relevant to how to stay afloat economically and still and still be a bit of a rebel. That's not necessarily the case for some of their friends and their families were affected because of it. And so I was very fortunate, but I just feel like, you know, that's. I'm hoping to be able to use my experience, what I grew up in to help these younger people as they figure out how to how to be involved in what's going on and to encourage them to be involved and realize that they absolutely have a voice. But yeah, just drives me nuts that we that we're basically we slid back and we have to fight for the same stuff over again and especially voting rights. I just that's really painful to have to be here where we're having to fight for that again.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:52:39] Yeah, yeah, absolutely. What do you feel like the lessons you take from the struggles that your parents and their era, their sort of contemporaries? What are the lessons you take from the struggles that you sort of know about into this current moment that you want to share with younger people?

**Margaret Hangan** [00:52:57] You know, the lessons are speak up and lessons are get involved. You don't have to be the leader, but you can do small little acts that absolutely do contribute to the larger picture. Be aware, be informed, but also recognize that you know we're dealing with you doing a lot of even being, you know, I live in Trump country. I'm a black woman, a liberal black woman and middle of Trump country. So, you know, I've had to come to terms with the fact that I do have extreme views and that that we need to recognize that we're all human beings and and there's a lot of humanity here, and we need to be open to other perspectives and get the humanity behind the other perspectives. So I'm having to come to terms with that is very easy to sit in Claremont and have a very liberal view. It's another thing to do it down here in Trump country. So I mean, those, you know, I was raised Unitarian. So I that's where I'm drawing on that. But those are the kinds of things that I'm drawing on in my daily life. I spent all my work life as well as other parts, and then I am about to retire in about two years. And as a fed, especially a black fed, I can't get involved in public displays of protest. Yeah, that's going to change when I retire.

**Jennifer Tilton** [00:54:36] Well, that's great. I think that's probably a great place to end, and I really look forward to like talking to your mom and your sister and getting more of these stories. But thank you so much for talking with us.

**Margaret Hangan** [00:54:49] You're welcome. And one of the things I wanted to bring up to you. We don't have to have this conversation right now. Especially since you guys are working on our time, I'm assuming this archive includes physical remains that you.

**End of Interview**  
[00:55:02]