**Michael Rotman** [00:00:00] Start recording here. All right. We are at Coventry Library. It is June 18, 2011. My name is Michael Rotman. And can I ask you to state your name, please?

**Regis Garrity** [00:00:11] My name is Regis Garrity.

**Michael Rotman** [00:00:13] OK. And where and when were you born?

**Regis Garrity** [00:00:17] I was born in the Cleveland area in 1950.

**Michael Rotman** [00:00:21] OK, what was your first memory of Coventry Village?

**Regis Garrity** [00:00:28] Well, I think my first memory was, as a West Sider here, and it was closer to the era of Haight-Ashbury than anything around here, so my first memory was just coming on over to check it out and have fun with the different kind of shops and restaurants and entertainment in the whole scene.

**Michael Rotman** [00:00:51] Did you have a favorite place that you went to?

**Regis Garrity** [00:00:55] I can't remember really having a favorite place. Liked 'em all. I remember,yeah, I do. I could answer that. It was a little bit later, but going downstairs in the CoventrYard, I think it was called, to the Mexican restaurant, which was really cool back then instead of the old chain-type Mexican restaurants. I don't even remember the name of it, but that's one memory I have come to think of it.

**Michael Rotman** [00:01:19] Now, so you brought this ad. Well I'll let you explain it. So how did you get involved with marketing Coventry and around what time period?

**Regis Garrity** [00:01:30] Well, it was from 1976 when I was a younger guy starting my career and was offered the opportunity to sell ads, sell advertising, and my career path was to get into advertising and marketing. So, in fact, George Allen was the publisher and John Mingo and some of those guys that are now past, but they were the real pros in advertising back in those days. So they said, if you want to see what you can do, go sell some ads, you know, and maybe you'll be able to write a little bit of the copy or a headline or two and then work with our designers and we'll put this together. And the magazine we have is the Key Magazine, which was the visitor's guide to Cleveland. It was found in the hotel lobbies and convention bureau, that kind of place. So if somebody was here on business or for medical reasons or whatever, from anywhere from Pittsburgh to Columbus to New York, they would hopefully pick it up at the counter of the hotel and they'd find out what they're going to do while they are in Cleveland. This particular issue had the cover story of the Cleveland Museum of Art's kind of famous exhibition at the time. Let's see. It was the European Vision of America. So actually, I worked a little with them and some of the other University Circle people, you know, doing a little editorial and mostly, you know, a couple ads here and there. And I'm saying to myself, well, my gosh, if it's a visitor's guide to Cleveland, these out of town visitors should know about Coventry, because Coventry is as cool as it gets anywhere, you know. And I was able to figure out that a two page center spread in that little magazine, by the way, the magazine's like five and a half, eight and a half, so it is a good guide. If you're a tourist as much as a businessman coming in here, you get to take it with you see what's going on. There is... It's probably still published, I don't know, I'm not staying in hotels these days. But so I went around to all the merchants. It took a couple days, I think, maybe even a week with the followup and all that. And, you know, offered the concept, and I says if we all go in this together and if you go in it together, it's gonna make sense as a big two page spread with a map and how to get around. And that's about the only way it'll work. So I'd like y'all to just take, let's see, there's eight, nine little squares per page. So it's a ninth of a page display ad. Gosh, I think it was 30, 60 bucks at the most for each advertiser back then. But remember, that's over 35 years ago almost. So that's what I did. So whether it was Bill Jones Leather or Belladonna, I remember that place, I think it was upstairs, yep. Coventry Books, of course, Trapezoid. Look at these. You know, the Light of Yoga Society, Good Food. I wonder if that preceded Tommy's. I don't even know that. Casbah, Carol Lindenmuth. Well, I guess it's interesting enough to read these, isn't it? The Mother Earth shoe store, High Tide Rock Bottom. Famous, of course. Rain Blue was a nice store. The Follie, what was that? Well, it was Ohio's largest selection of jeans and tops, that's what is was. The New World, haircuts for men and women, Lady and Company, which was attire of course, The Elephant's Trunk, baubles, bangles, beads, and basics. And Rocco's, fresh fish, live lobster, and Earthen Pots and Coventry Graphics I think all participated. So they're all in this two page spread. and if anybody's listening to this that will remember those places better than I will because some come and go like any other retail. I'm happy to hear some are still on the street, and that's part of what this reunion's all about. Those folks all getting together. So since this was colorful and I didn't really plan to give it all about me and my memory, but it does kind of fit historically. And now the more I think about it, I'm proud of it.

**Michael Rotman** [00:05:44] Why? What makes you proud of it?

**Regis Garrity** [00:05:47] Well, that I was able to be the energy behind getting 18 people together to agree on something. And I think back then, that might have been hard to do for Coventry people. I don't even know that. I take that... You could edit that out. But for any group of businesses to go in on something takes a little bit of persuasion and sincerity, and that's my style and I think it won over even as a 26 year old.

**Michael Rotman** [00:06:16] Can you give me a feel for, I see you might not remember that much, but what was the neighborhood Coventry like back then. Obviously, you were drawn to it. You said you wanted to have visitors, you know, check it out because you thought it was one of the coolest neighborhoods in Cleveland. What drew you to it?

**Regis Garrity** [00:06:33] What drew me to the neighborhood or to sell the concept of promoting the neighborhood to out of towners? Or both?

**Michael Rotman** [00:06:42] How about, either, or yeah, both, sure.

**Regis Garrity** [00:06:44] Well, what drew me to it, I mentioned earlier, 'cause Coventry is cool and it's awesome. And it's near University Circle and that's part of Cleveland. It's really central Cleveland as much as downtown, no matter what part of the county and now the outlying counties you are. What drew me to the concept was, again, to share it with out of towners and help these advertisers make some money from out of town budgets. It's untapping a new market. And furthermore, though, at that time, if I recall, you know, it was a little bit after that whole Woodstock generation, and Coventry was becoming a pleasant place to be with dynamite shopping period and a destination neighborhood, not just because of the community of Coventry, but because of this, what I did, the business of Coventry. That'll be fifty dollars, please.

**Michael Rotman** [00:07:45] Yeah, right! So nothing like this had been had been done before. Kind of getting all the different businesses to kind of come together for one kind of advertising spread?

**Regis Garrity** [00:07:54] I don't think so. It's likely that other attempts were made and possibly achieved, and, you know, Friday Magazine with the Plain Dealer or the local entertainment, but I personally, which read all of them faithfully, I don't remember more than a half page. You know, maybe the orchestra program. I don't remember, but I don't I'm sure not none of them had 18 advertisers to go in together, maybe six. But I'm not positive.

**Michael Rotman** [00:08:24] And these were pretty unique stories back then. There might not have been shopping like this around other parts of Cleveland it seems like.

**Regis Garrity** [00:08:30] Oh, yeah, you're right about that. That's a good point. Very unique, especially to Cleveland, which was kind of, you know, slow to convert over to what was happening then, which was, like I said, bubbles, bangles, beads, and basics, you know, and stuff like... and the Earth Shoe and the Bill Jones Leather. And even the Mad Greek. That was a great place, by the way. And now I remember that going there. It's up on... same folks are on Cedar Hill now. So, yes, that is a good question, and that is the answer. It was cool stuff. You know the stuff when you go to a place like San Francisco, you go to Haight-Ashbury. When you go to Asheville, you're looking at all the artwork and the this and the that and the cool shops or the Village in New York, et cetera. You know, this was our version of that. It was Coventry Village. It still is.

**Michael Rotman** [00:09:22] Do you remember anything about the store owners or talking to them or meeting with them? Was there anything that stood out about them?

**Regis Garrity** [00:09:29] Yeah, a little bit. I do. I remember they were also very nice to me. Every one of 'em. I remember some of them being very lovely ladies, frankly. Kind of sophisticated and cool in many ways, but still had that, oh, you know, the... the look of Coventry. I hate to use the word hippie, but it was that look and I'm still seeing that with the folks today as I walked up and down the street. You know, the loose-fitting cotton and linens and the colorful stuff. And, you know, back then it might have been a headband or two. And the long hair, of course. Actually as a semi-conservative guy, I really kind of appreciated it. But yeah, I do. I can't remember, too, I don't want a faux pas here and admit that I don't remember too many names that well, but I do remember the folks and... 'cause I had to make a second visit pretty much to go collect their business card or whatever, to pick up their logo and then shoot it and strip it in into the ad. So yeah, there was some relationships that were rather brief, but it was a nice exchange back in the day and I guess once it's ink on paper, it lasts forever.

**Michael Rotman** [00:10:47] And there it is right now. Have you... Well, you're here today obviously, do you still go back to Coventry a lot?

**Regis Garrity** [00:10:55] You know, actually if I'm having an out of town visitor, it's definitely on the tour. You know, the cemetery, maybe a quick drive up Fairmount to see the beautiful homes, zip down Coventry, stop for something. One of the good stores or one of the good places to get a drink or bite. Then, you know, on down to Murray Hill, hit University Circle, downtown, blah, blah, blah. And then. Now there's stuff all over Cleveland. I live in Lakewood. You can take 'em to Gordon Square and Tremont and Ohio City. You know, Cleveland is more vibrant now than it ever was. In fact, if I was 26 years old like I was when I sold this ad, I'd be happy as heck leaving here. I wouldn't see any reason to want to leave.

**Michael Rotman** [00:11:39] Well, is there anything else you want to share about Coventry or anything else you experienced with the neighborhood?

**Regis Garrity** [00:11:46] No, just that it's been a long time. You just asked me if I come back a lot or often and no, it isn't. Like I said, if I have a visitor, I mean, who's got... you know, if I was retired, I'd probably take my bicycle over here. But, you know, just to drop this off because it was a colorful thing and I thought I'd get the heck out of here before I met anybody. That's why I was here before two o'clock. But then they were nice enough and suggested I do this. So I'm doing it, and I have a feeling it's a nice contribution. So that's my little take on the thing. Now, I'm not a resident, not a merchant, not a former hanger-outer, so they may have totally different takes on it, but I hope my take and memories are worth recording and remembering for others.

**Michael Rotman** [00:12:31] Well, yeah, I think they definitely are, and thanks for coming out and thank you for sharing this with us.

**Regis Garrity** [00:12:36] You're welcome. I'm happy to do it.