

## Talking Book Voices Podcast Transcript: Episode Five

### NARRATOR INTRO

Welcome to the Talking Book Voices, the podcast where we explore the wonders of the Texas Talking Book Program. Join us in making literature accessible to all. This program, a division of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission provides a free library service to Texans of all ages with a qualifying visual, physical or reading disability. Each episode will uncover its history, share stories, get updates and tips to maximize this invaluable program. So, whether you love reading, seeking accessible materials, or just curious about the program this podcast is for you. Visit [www.texastalkingbooks.org](http://www.texastalkingbooks.org) for more info. So, let's begin the talking Book Voices, a podcast by the Texas State library and Archives Commission.

### NARRATOR

Welcome to a special episode of Talking Book Voices. Today you'll have a unique treat for you as we sit down with dedicated narrator Paul Klemperer from the Talking Book Program's Volunteer Recording Studio. Get ready to hear first-hand about his incredible journey and the impact he's had in reading for patrons for the program.

### PAUL KLEMPERER

My name is Paul Klemperer. I'm a volunteer at Texas Talking Book Program. I've been doing it since 1998 and its now, year 2023, so that's about 25 years. And I started as a reviewer, moved to monitoring and then I was so happy when they said, do you feel like narrating? And I'm, I'm a ham. I play music for a living. So, I was like, give me that microphone. So that's what I've been doing. Ever since, and I do enjoy it and I love working with the TBP program doing a variety of books. I love doing character voices, though I've learned to tone it down, which is important for the reader, right? And I just love all the different subject matter that we can do and all the different niches of literature and history.

What maybe want to start volunteering was I used to volunteer before I was a road music musician. And then I just didn't have time. So, when I got off the road in about 1998, I was looking around for something to do in the community and I saw an ad in the paper that they wanted volunteers for this program. So, I thought I'll try it out. How hard could it be? And I've been with them ever since.

I've recorded many books, many magazine articles, all kinds of stuff. I'm trying to think of. The first book I recorded, and it's lost in the mists of time, but I do remember one of the earliest recordings I did was a book about Bob Wills. I think it was called HUBBIN IT, and I think it was by Ruth Sheldon. And it was just a short book that interviewed him and had some nice anecdotes. And as a musician I enjoyed reading books about other musicians, and particularly musicians that were formative for my own playing and Bob Wills is very important.

So that was great to be able to learn something while I was recording and also feel like I'm putting something down for people to have access to. So, it's just a nice full circle as an artist to be reading material about other artists for people that want to know.

It's volunteer work, but I'd do it even if they didn't pay me, which they don't.

So, I like recording a variety of books, my sort of system is I do some fiction that allows me to do voices. Then after that's done, I do history or something more of a nonfiction, and then then whatever else strikes my fancy. And it's nice to just have that variety. Keeps it fresh. Right now, I'm reading a book called BLACK SOLDIERS IN JIM CROW TEXAS 1899 TO 1917 by Garna L. Christian, and it's a good book. It's a research book as far as it documents all these events and lots of interviews and very thorough documentation.

It's not as exciting as reading a swashbuckling pirate adventure, but it's valuable information and I feel like I'm doing something worthwhile helping to provide that to a larger community. Who knows, someone may be using that in their own research for some other writing project or we don't know where it could lead, so I feel that's kind of an exciting thing in itself.

I really like working with the community of the Talking Book Program.

And every book is a project that involves a team, and I really appreciate the expertise of the staff that know how to get things done and can answer questions when you get into some gray areas and then all the volunteers that come in and everybody is like bringing their A-game because they want to be here.

And it makes me want to bring my A-game, too.

So, you know every book, it's like a long process. It I put in two hours a week. Other people may be putting in more hours a week, but it takes me a while to get through a book. And so, I have to really think of it from start to finish. And there's a good little glow at the end when we finish a project together and it's added to the archive.

I don't really have a favorite line from a book, but I have some great memories of certain books and one was from really early on when I was narrating, and I was all excited to be able to do voices and I picked a murder mystery written by an English woman who lived in South Texas. And the book, I believe, is called HIGH ISLAND BLUES. I think the author is Ann Cleeves

And it was a set in this, like bird watching community in South Texas. And it's a tour that's English people being brought to South Texas to watch birds and a third of the characters are South Texas people, a third are English tourists, and a third are English natives who have moved to South Texas. And it's even said it in the narration had lived long enough in Texas that their English accents had a South Texas twang. So, I bit off more than I could chew with that one and I was trying to do all these voices with, you know, a Northumberland accent with the

South Texas twang and not sound like a bad Monty Python version. Something like, “oh, look, it's another body y'all”.

I'm really happy to be contributing to this expanding library that's available to patrons from all kinds of backgrounds, and I really appreciate that that we provide materials on all kinds of subjects, all kinds of viewpoints and all kinds of interests. And I would hope a patron can find something that matches what they're looking. For where they don't have to settle for something just to fill time. If they don't have access to other material, whether it's nonfiction, it's something very practical, or it's just total fantasy entertainment. I've done some really funny, silly, you know, sword and sorcery type swashbuckler stuff and I want that to be as entertaining and take it as seriously as anything else because you want the reader to just be able to get immersed in the book.

And over the years, I've really come to take that more seriously. It's not about my performance or my ego, it's about what can I do to make the listening experience satisfying for the listener. And if I can do that, it's like being a musician. As I've grown as a musician. It's not about me playing music. It's about what the audience hears. And how does it relate to them and satisfy them.

I would like to make a pitch for volunteers and it's part of what I'm working on is to break down the separation between our lives and other people's lives, where volunteerism or charity is seen as something that you do for other people, we all know we're selfish and we do stuff for ourselves.

And we got to have a good time and that's really my philosophy. So, I love volunteering, but I do it because I enjoy it. It adds to my life, and I pick things that will help me grow and everything I've worked on here at TBP has helped me grow. And so hopefully volunteers out there can find what they want. In that spirit, you know, don't do it because you feel like you should. Though you're probably guilty of something, so you should feel bad, but don't do it because of that. Feel good about what you do and find something you like to do. Maybe Talking Book Program is right for you. It's working for me.

NARRATOR

Well, there you have it. Whether you're passionate about reading or want to contribute to making literature accessible to everyone, their opportunities awaiting you.

For more information about how to volunteer, give us a call at 512-475-4605 or online at [www.texastalkingbooks.org](http://www.texastalkingbooks.org). And for more information about the Texas State Library Archives Commission visits at [www.tsl.texas.gov](http://www.tsl.texas.gov). Let's go beyond the pages and make a difference together. Alright, bye.