

**Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association**  
**Oral History Project**

**Narrator:**

**JOHN BREDESEN**

**Interviewed by:**

**ALEX BROKAW**

**KATE THORNHILL**

**March 6, 2021**

**(recorded using *Zoom*, a telephone web conferencing tool)**

## **NARRATOR**

John Bredesen, originally a Wisconsin native, moved to Eugene in 1982. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, and became a Registered Professional Electrical Engineer in 1964. Prior to retiring, he was the Chief Engineer for Eugene's NPR station, KLCC. Along his career path, he built many broadcast facilities from Delaware to Oregon, including a major TV station in Dallas, Texas.

John survived the passing of two wives to cancer: Carolyn Spector and Fran Ross, both of whom are interred in the cemetery. He is now married to Betsy Halpern.

John has been a board member since 2002. During his tenure, he served a cumulative total of ten years as Board President. He has been responsible for or supervised numerous capital projects, for ten years the music series, "Music To Die For," and he's been the editor of the monthly email newsletter since 2010.

**This transcript has been lightly edited for readability. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose. The following transcript has been reviewed, edited and approved by the narrator.**

Brokaw: This oral history interview is part of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association's Oral History Project.

This interview will be conducted by Alex Brokaw, an EMCA Board member, with assistance from Kate Thornhill, an EMCA digital archives volunteer and with technical advisor Carolina Hernandez, an EMCA digital archives volunteer.

Today's interview is with John Bredesen, and that is spelled B- R -E -D -E -S- E -N, on March 6, 2021, taking place over Zoom, which is a web conferencing tool. The recordings will be made available for research and educational purposes for future EMCA boards, staff and the general public.

John, do you agree to be recorded for this project, and do you give your permission for EMCA to preserve and make available your recorded and transcribed interviews?

Bredesen: I sure do.

Brokaw: Great let's get started then. Let's start at the beginning. Where were you born and where did you grow up?

Bredesen: I was born in Beloit, Wisconsin many years ago. And the second part is much more difficult because my dad was an army officer, and we moved a lot. I changed schools eighteen times by the time I finished high school. And I don't recommend that for anybody.

So, I've literally lived from Massachusetts to California, to Washington, to Dallas in my lifetime. And a lot of places in between, and Guam and Germany.

Brokaw: Did you find it interesting at all? Being a child or teenager, maybe not?

Bredesen: The thing that I feel I missed the most is the opportunity to make any close long-term friends. As we'll get into, I've been married a couple times and I've envied both of them [my wives] because, through email and Zoom and things they're in contact with kids they grew up with. My current wife [Betsy Halpern] has friends she communicates with back to the third grade.

Brokaw: Did you have any surprising or important experiences that affected the direction of your life?

Bredesen: Oh, well I can't point to anything specific.

I had a younger brother who I could pick on readily, as needed. But a lot of the time I had a lot of free time and I simply, for reasons I don't know why, I became interested in things technical. Electrical, mechanical, things of this nature.

And it gave me a lot of opportunity to hook wires together and run batteries down and create short circuits and things like that and I learned a lot that way.

Brokaw: I guess that would have had influence on what you chose as your career then?

Bredesen: Yes. My career was as a broadcast engineer. For instance, I mentioned before we started, I mentioned Dallas. I went down there specifically to build a television station from the ground up.

Brokaw: And what year was that?

Bredesen: That was 1980. And I was in Dallas for— I lived there. I did a lot of the initial work from Wisconsin. But once I moved down there, I was in Dallas for two and a half years. It took that long to build the station. And then I was promoted to station manager and actually ran the station until I decided to move out here.

Brokaw: Where is here?

Bredesen: Here is Eugene, Oregon.

Being associated with the Eugene Masonic Cemetery. A cool way to bring that in.

Thornhill: Yes, and John what year did you move to Eugene?

Bredesen: Very tag end of 1982, December 23 specifically. I generally count from 1983.

Brokaw: How did you become acquainted with the cemetery? And then, why did it become important to you?

Bredesen: I became initially acquainted with it very soon after I was here because the lady that I married [Carolyn Spector] lived only about four blocks away.

And as now, although not as pretty, if you will, it was still a nice place to walk through. It was still peaceful if you got through the weeds and things of that nature. So we walked through here, through the cemetery many times.

And then did you ask me how I got involved?

Brokaw: How did you get involved with the board?

Bredesen: Well, it was unfortunate, that lady I mentioned subsequently died of cancer in 2001.

The Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association came into being in 1994 or '95, and so the organization was going. And when Carolyn was in the final stages of her life the question of where to be buried came up. And she was Jewish. She called the temple and the temple—Temple Beth Israel— and

they said, well basically, there are two cemeteries we work with and strangely enough, I can never remember the one, the one with the wavy brick walls on Willamette Street [Rest-Haven Memorial Park], or the Masonic Cemetery.

Because by that time the cemetery had already established a working relationship with TBI. And so Carolyn and I actually came up to the cemetery. And I had met with Kay Holbo, who I call the spark plug for the renovation of the cemetery and she recommended a few plots, and one of them seemed to fit with what Carolyn had told me. Carolyn and I went up there, visited and she said, "this is perfect."

So we bought that lot and then when she died later that year, that was that.

Well one thing that I did not realize was the fellow that was then the treasurer [of EMCA], which I didn't know about, was a close social friend of Carolyn's and mine.

Brokaw: And who was that?

Bredesen: Jim Luckey.

Jim was the treasurer at that time, which I said I didn't know, but he said to somebody, maybe John will be interested in becoming involved with the board.

And so I was, you say, invited to lunch and was pounced upon by three people and so I joined the board. It's sometime in 2002, just a year after, after Carolyn died.

Brokaw: How long have you been serving on the board, well from 2002 to-

Bredesen: About nineteen years.

Brokaw: Nineteen years and you're still on the board?

Bredesen: Yes.

Brokaw: Let me ask you this, do you think you have, how long, or how much time, do you think you have spent, or do you still spend on board business? Let's say per month.

Bredesen: Some of that is pretty variable, according to the season, as we will talk about, I believe.

One of my first big jobs on the board was, I became the president of the board, a position which I held for ten terms, simply because I couldn't do enough arm twisting, but it was fun. I'd really never done anything like that before and it worked well.

Brokaw: Can I ask you a question here referring to that, did you miss the fact that the board did not have an executive director?

Bredeesen: No, I really didn't because, as I said, I'd never really held a position like this. I simply realized that there was an organization with a big job to do. We did have a good landscape crew at that point which needed some direction. But it was there, they were good, cared about the cemetery. So it was just a matter of getting very involved. The president kind of served as the executive director.

Brokaw: When did you take that position as president?

Bredeesen: Well, I don't exactly remember. It may have been at the end of 2003, 2004.

Brokaw: That was big jump from joining the board.

Bredeesen: Well, they gave me a year to learn where the skeletons were buried.

Thornhill: John, I have a question for you, so with you just joining the board versus now being essentially one of the main people in charge, how would you compare your role and responsibilities? What were some of the tasks or projects that you worked on?

Bredeesen: The first big physical project I became involved with was the building of what we called the Garden Cottage, which is just a little eighteen by eighteen-foot building that was built primarily for two purposes. One was to provide us a little office where whoever is meeting with potential clients would have a place to sit down, chat. And it also served as a storage area, an active storage area for all the landscaping tools and items that are needed. Prior to that they were just piled up within Hope Abbey Mausoleum. And that certainly didn't lend itself to making a good impression with visitors.

My first project, along with Denny Hellesvig [board member] was working on building the Garden Cottage.

Brokaw: And did you physically build part of that cottage?

Bredeesen: Oh yes. I have some pictures, we may have just poured the foundation down in my hip boots, down there removing the forms from the concrete. And it was pretty much a matter of whatever was necessary, a lot of carpentry work in there. Because we had a building permit with the city, the electrical and plumbing trades had to do their work, which we couldn't do, even though I could have done the electrical work, but I couldn't do it legally.

Brokaw: I would have assumed that would have been part of your job, but you must have been retired by then.

Bredeesen: Yes, I've been retired longer than I care to talk about sometimes.

Brokaw: Okay then we won't talk about it.

Bredeesen: I had retired about five years prior to joining the board.

Brokaw: I see. What were some of the other projects that you have either instigated or chaired or you managed at the cemetery?

Bredesen: I can name two more that are pretty much my own. The thing you have to realize is that so much of the physical work that was done around there—and I kind of tagged along as I could—was instigated and supervised by Denny Hellesvig. He was a licensed architect; we are so incredibly fortunate to have had him on the board. And we are very, very good friends.

Brokaw: Didn't he also work for the city and the permit office?

Bredesen: He was the—I believe the term is—the City Official [City Building Official]. There's a place, an office you go to, to get building permits and inspections.

Brokaw: He would know the rules and regulations.

Bredesen: Yes, and he was a licensed architect. But when we decided that we really wanted to open Hope Abbey to the public more, and it was—

There was a bathroom, a lavatory in there, but it was functioning only for mopping floors. There was a mop sink and a toilet and that was it. But if we wanted the public to use it we had to bring it up to public standards. We made the decision wisely to also voluntarily bring it up to ADA—Americans with Disabilities Act—standards, widen the doorway, put in handrails, things of this nature. And I did most of the finishing work, the woodwork that's in there, and designed the basic layout.

And then the last project that pretty much was my own was the installation of a pretty extensive underground water system throughout the cemetery, because there is a focus on restoring the cemetery which meant bringing in heritage plants and native plants to Oregon. Quite often they needed to be watered and that meant that the landscape crew is carrying buckets of water up over the hill. And so we put in this system. I basically did the layout, got the bids and saw that it was installed.

Brokaw: Well that sounds like—

Bredesen: Other than that, a lot of the projects that I worked on really were not my own. Remember I was still running the cemetery too.

Brokaw: That's right.

Bredesen: During a lot of this activity.

Brokaw: To do these projects you probably had to have grants to afford to do these things. And did you write grants [applications], was that part of what you did?

Bredesen: I've written several grants [applications], something I'm not, was not familiar with, doing with, or dealing with but I didn't go after any big

ones. I would go after four, five, ten-thousand-dollar grants that would be specifically for a project. We had grants that helped cover the landscaping, the irrigation. I don't know, we've just had a lot of grants, but I was not the only one in the organization to be writing grants. So grants are very important, but I only played a relatively small part in that.

Thornhill: John, who were some of the granting agencies you would apply too?

Bredesen: The Lane County Historical Society, Oregon Parks and Rec statewide had a division that dealt with historic cemeteries, they had quite a few grants. We also got grants from the Oregon Community Foundation. And there were a couple of others if you will, people that had grant opportunities that would fit our category, which usually was education or historic preservation.

Brokaw: Did the city of Eugene ever issue any grants?

Bredesen: Yes, yes, now that you mention it. One of the things that Denny may have talked about is the beautiful main gate that exists. Beautiful concrete structure with wrought iron gates. And we received a very large neighborhood improvement grant from the city of Eugene to do that project.

That one I think was \$25,000.

Brokaw: Wow.

Bredesen: And then of course with most grants you have to match the money. So we had to come up with the rest of the money and we discovered that you can sometimes write another grant to cover your other half too, played the two grants against each other, that was nice.

Thornhill: Did you ever apply for grants for maintaining plots or historically preserving the plots in the cemetery?

Bredesen: I don't recall that specifically because that generally is an operating expenditure and grants generally don't like to fund ongoing operations. They're more enamored of projects, something we can put some money into and here it is.

Brokaw: John, you founded, and it's now a five-month summer and fall concert series held in Hope Abbey with the title *Music to Die For*. And you continue to book the musicians and you MC the concerts and do you have any interesting stories about that and who came up with a clever name?

Bredesen: Charley Wright [board member] came up with it. I wish I could take credit for that because it's got a lot of attention from various people.

The interesting thing about that, I mentioned trying to get Hope Abbey open to the public more. And it was to become just a gorgeous, gorgeous building.



And once we—well, in the process we noticed that the acoustics in there, with its hard surfaces lent itself beautifully to many kinds of music.

And the first concert that was held in there, as I recall was a woodwind concert of Charley, Charley Wright's group.

Oh, at about the same time and this was, I want to say 2001. We were approached by a woman's singing group of the Sweet Adelines, which is the female counterpart to barbershop singers. They wanted to know if—the director had seen the inside of the building—they wanted to know if they could use Hope Abbey as a venue for a memorial concert to the 9-11 disaster. And this was to be a ten-year event. I mean the tenth anniversary. And we looked at each other and said, well, why not?

So we borrowed some chairs and got out the word somehow. I think the Register Guard [local newspaper] at that time was very supportive of musical events. And they gave us some publicity and we must have had fifty or sixty people show up to hear these, I think sixteen women, do this beautiful concert in there. And so it's kind of out of these first two concerts, the idea of doing a regular series came. And it just kind of grew from there.

I'm not musically trained, but I love music, I sang with the Eugene Concert Choir and I volunteered. Well, let me see if I can get some musicians to come in, so the first year we only had four [concerts], we do them once a month, on the last Sunday of the month.

This is a reasonable amount of work in getting them set up, especially on my part. I have to do programs [printed programs] and things like that. And because there's no heat in Hope Abbey we can't start too early in the year, we can't go too late, so we go June through October in normal times.

And the response was great enough, we decided to go one additional month. We only had four initially. So it's been very popular.

Brokaw: Are these professional musicians or amateur musicians?

Bredesen: Yes! Some of them, almost all of them have if you will, day jobs. But there are some people in there that are classically trained. And we've had a couple that have actually played with the Eugene Symphony Orchestra or the Oregon Mozart Players, that are part of a group. A lot of others are just people that picked up music along the way.

Brokaw: Are the concerts well attended?

Bredesen: Too well attended, sometimes. We have folding chairs for about eighty-two people, and I'd say on average, we have standing room situations, more often than not. And I think we've gotten— And I just hope the Fire Marshall is not listening, but it probably had well over 100 people in there at times, just standing in the aisles.

Brokaw: Well it might be hard to have a fire in the—

Bredesen: Well that's true but that's not the way the Fire Marshall works.

Brokaw: Everything is concrete or marble.

Bredesen: Marble, sure but— While we're on the subject, nobody is paid, free concerts open to anybody that wants to show up, at one o'clock. A lot of people have learned to bring their own portable chairs.

Musicians are not paid. The only financial remuneration they might get is if they have any CDs of their own, they're free to sell them and keep the profits.

But in later years I've had really no problem at all trying to get musicians. Occasionally, though, there will be a problem, finding a balance. I don't want to concentrate on one type of music. I like to do a broad spectrum from classical, string quartets, to a group I was a little bit nervous about booking because I didn't know them, called *Wild Hogs in the Woods*. It was kind of a novelty blue grass group that was wonderful as it turned out.

And we had a lutenist in there. Like I said, I try to get a broad spectrum. And the biggest problem sometimes it's trying to find a good balance. People send me emails all the time, "...like to really play in there."

Brokaw: How about singers, do you have them often?

Bredesen: Oh we have had them in there. That is unfortunately one of the problems with the acoustics in there, because the surfaces are hard. The width from one end to the other is well over 100 feet. We get quite a bit of reverberation. And when you have people singing words that reverberation tends to cover up the word right before it if it's something of any speed. It lends itself to beautiful, slow madrigals and things of that nature.

But yes, we do have vocal groups.

Brokaw: I'd like to talk to you about your editing and producing of the eNewsletter. Can you tell us about some of your experiences as the editor, and your challenges doing that?

Bredesen: That was another one of these things where I opened my mouth and ended up doing it. Which is the way of a volunteer organization, so you brought it up, you do it, okay. I actually had to go back and look, the very first—

We used a commercial organization to produce this email newsletter. And they keep very good records, and I went back to the mailing list and discovered that the very first names were put into the email list at the end of 2009. So, it's been going on twelve, thirteen years.

But by this point the cemetery had a biannual [ actually semiannual ] paper newsletter that was mailed out to the group, but that was only twice a year.

And we were starting to do things aimed more directly at the public. And we needed a better way of getting the word out, more timely way. And so we got this e-newsletter started and, by and large it is monthly. Occasionally I'll get lazy or something, like when I broke my leg. I rarely will miss a month. But other than that— It basically has information, some "did you know about the cemetery," or a person, or we're doing *Music to Die For*. We publicize it; there are projects that are going on, work parties and things like that, that's where the e-newsletter shines.

Brokaw: Do you write all the articles yourself?

Bredeesen: I guess I write about half of them, board members will write articles. I mentioned the *Monumental News* which is twice a year. Occasionally articles will be repeated in the *Monumental News*, and I figured, why not, because there's not a huge overlap in readers. So if it's valid to one group in the *Monumental News*, it's probably of interest to electronic readers too,

Thornhill: John, I have a question. When did the physical newsletter start and end? Or is it still going and then when did the digital start?

Bredeesen: Digital started as I mentioned early, I'm sorry, the very end of 2009. The e-newsletter, I mean the *Monumental News*, the paper one, started before I joined the board. But it was in late 1997, remember I mentioned that the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association officially began in 1995. And I think the paper newsletter started a couple years after that. [ed note: first issue of *Monumental News* was in Fall 1995.] So the electronic newsletter, the monthly one, 2010 is when it really got going.

Brokaw: How did you get your mailing list for that?

Bredeesen: The biggest source was the visitor's sign-up book at Hope Abbey. I mentioned briefly a program the cemetery has run for years called *Last Sunday*. Because there is a continuing problem as exists with most cemeteries of vandalism, we don't dare leave the mausoleum unlocked for the public. And consequently, there's limited access. So the last Sunday of every month is an open house. On that Sunday afternoon, visitors [can] register and that's where I say we got most sign ins. And then when *Music to Die For* started we started to get a lot more, because that was bringing in large groups of people.

Brokaw: How many people are on the list, do you think?

Bredeesen: Funny I should know, because I looked yesterday, 899. And one of the statistics that I get back is that roughly one third of them open and read the email, so 330, sum of average readers every year. This combines with the comparison of the *Monumental News* of a mailing list of about 2000. So, they're much bigger. I don't how that mailing list came about. There's overlap in content.

Thornhill: Since we're on the topic of newsletters were you also heavily involved in starting the EMCA website?

Bredesen: Well, I don't know how heavily I was involved. It came from a board discussion when I was president. And I can't even tell you what the genesis was. Just aware of it, it was there at some point, after we talked about it, I don't know who did it. Charley Wright is now the webmaster for it, but I don't think he was on the board at that time, so somebody else got it going. I had some contacts with web service providers that I think got us going initially.

Brokaw: Well as you said you were president for ten years, which is a long time. And you've been talking about that, but do you have any other special memories, about being the board president?

Bredesen: Well, I think the typical one that you find again with so many of the volunteer organizations, it's like herding cats. But people who join the board learn very quickly and we try to let them know ahead of time that it's what we call a working board. Technically, if you're on the board you're expected to be involved, more than just showing up for board meetings. And so consequently over the years we've had some very, very talented people come and go, that have helped with the project. You know I made it sound like Denny and I did these projects and no, that's not right. Members of the board pitched in a lot. We have a site committee right now, four or five people that are primarily responsible for the grounds, the physical part of that. We have other committees that do other functions so it's a matter of keeping communication going, lending direction. This needs doing, any volunteers?

Thornhill: What were the names of the board members that you were mentioning?

Bredesen: I don't have a roster in front of me.

Thornhill: That's okay maybe like Hugh [Prichard] or Denny [Hellesvig].

Bredesen: Hugh was a prior president, is still peripherally involved. He came up very recently with a surprise offer. He's got a very big garden and he wanted to document it and so he hired a commercial drone outfit and flew a camera all over his property and it's just stunning. And we're talking with him and he said, "you know I'd like to do that for the cemetery." So at some point, there will be available on the web a tour of the cemetery from a bird's eye view.

Hugh has family interred in there. He donated a beautiful stone drinking fountain years ago. But he's not on the board now but he continues to have a wonderful interest in the cemetery and we're very lucky to have him help us with projects occasionally like that.

Brokaw: And I imagine there are many other board members that have done wonderful things like that, too.

Bredeesen: Oh yeah, if you've been to the cemetery at the entrance to Hope Abbey there are two very large concrete urns that really had some very delicate petals on them that were facing upwards. And the tops of these were being worn away by something and Denny finally realized it was acid rain that was eating away at this. Well anyway, they started to fall off. So I went to one of the board members (who has passed on and is buried in the cemetery) and asked if he would fund the complete renewal of those petals and he did. So, I mean, this is where another board member jumped in, he was able to finance them.

Brokaw: John, what was his name?

Bredeesen: Alex McBirney. He was a professor at the university.

Thornhill: Is that the University of Oregon?

Bredeesen: Yes, University of Oregon. He was a volcanologist, studied volcanos.

Bredeesen: And you mentioned other members. Kay Holbo [founder EMCA], who has already been interviewed, was the one that realized that something needed to be done. And she pulled the strings and got the city [Eugene] involved. You know I wasn't around at that time, so I don't know the details, but my favorite nickname for her is, "the spark plug." She's the one that really set the whole thing off.

Brokaw: Were there any, and I ask this of everyone, were there any, what I call, bumps in the road that were challenges for you, and at the same time, what are some of your best memories of being on the board?

Bredeesen: Bumps in the road? It was always tough when we had to replace a valued board member. But I think the thing that gave me the biggest heartburn was when we would lose one of the paid landscape crew. Because in many cases it wasn't until they were gone that we'd realize how much we were relying on them to keep the ground suitable and safe for visitors. So that happened a few times. We actually just went through that now with Caroline Forell as the president so we're back to full strength again there.

The other thing that used to be a real problem early on was vandalism and graffiti. We've had tombstones turned over. The cemetery is hilly, we've had small ones roll down the hill. We had one episode where a couple of middle schoolers just got out of hand and they broke one of the tall, thin tombstones called a tablet. And there'll be just a piece of marble or sandstone a couple of inches thick, four feet high and they're really easy to break. So, they came through and just broke [them], and fortunately we were able to find them [pieces]. We went through a process which I wasn't aware of, which is wonderful, adjudication. It was through the juvenile justice system. So we met with them, with their parents, and the board and

decided what our repayment would be. So anyway, we worked through it, the boys did what they needed to do, there was no record left on their—no black marks on their records, because they were basically good kids that just got carried away. But we've had other cases of vandalism, just terrible. And we, for a while, had a fellow that would live in it [cemetery]. At night, sometimes at the entrance to Hope Abbey, he left it looking like the city dump. Bread, food, clothes, all very neatly scattered right in front of the doors. Never did figure that one out, he just disappeared.

Brokaw: Well, on the other side, what are some of your best memories?

Bredesen: The big one of course is seeing the success that our little group has been able to bring to the cemetery. It's been described by, well the lady that runs the state cemetery thing, this is an example of how a cemetery should be run. And that's primarily because we really insisted upon a working board. And we had the people in it that were willing to work hard, got the grants. As a real can-do situation, so just over the years seeing this start. Another one that we're working on [endowment], I am very glad to be a part of this.

For a cemetery that is over 150 years old it's amazing that there are any grave sites left, but there are. This has been our primary source of operating revenue, sales of grave sites, and we are running out of them. So we realized about fifteen years ago that we needed to start an endowment so that when we do run out we would have funds to be able to keep it going. So I was instrumental in getting the very first endowment. We actually have three separate ones, the proceeds from them are focused in different areas. But we started with one and we now have three and it's growing. And that was very satisfying to me because I just didn't want to see the cemetery be given back to the former owners. We don't have the money [now] to keep it going, but I think we will be just fine [with fully-funded endowments]. And you'll hear more about that in the future.

Brokaw: Yes, without an endowment, or the right sized endowment you wouldn't be able to operate the cemetery for that many years, and I assume that your goal is to—

Bredesen: To keep it going as far into the future as possible.

Thornhill: With keeping it going I was wondering, because you were the president for nineteen years, how many years and sorry, was that Alex? ...ten years, I'm sorry but you've been involved for nineteen years and you were the president for ten years, what were the daily operations, what did you do at a high level? It sounded like raising a lot of money, like endowments are very important.

Bredesen: The endowment was started by a very sizable gift and we're fortunate to have somebody that was willing to commit to the future of the cemetery. To get that started and, yes, that did occur on my watch it you will. But we're getting back to what, what is the most satisfying and I think overall probably it's to see the opening of Hope Abbey Mausoleum in the state that it's in right now. It is just so beautiful. And again, this is kind of a John, Denny, and a lot of other people that are involved with it.

Brokaw: You two were the real guiding forces in so many projects, I'll just throw that in.

Bredesen: Thank you. When we inherited the building, there were two or three inches of mud on the floor. It would rain and the ceiling would leak, water, heavy rain would actually be running across the floor and out the front doors. Got that taken care of. All eighty-three [eighty-one] windows had been broken and smashed so many times that the previous owners simply cement blocked them through so there was no light in there, and no electricity. And now we've replaced all of the windows. There is electric lighting in there. And it's once again just beautiful, people, a place to visit. And it makes it even more interesting to invite people in for these open houses and *Music to Die For*.

Brokaw: I want to thank you John for this interview, it's been very enlightening, and I just want to ask you, is there anything else you'd like to say before we close?

Bredesen: Yeah, how long am I going to stay on the board? (laughs)

Brokaw: That's up to you.

Bredesen: And that is the correct answer.

You did ask the question how much time am I putting in right now? Really depends. I put in several hours every month doing the newsletter. When *Music to Die For* allows, I've got more hours and every month getting arrangements done, programs printed up.

But I've got some little behind the jobs, behind the scenes jobs that are involved with the mechanics of getting the paper newsletter printed in the mail. It doesn't sound like much, but twice a year the president writes a fundraising letter. And that goes out to about 500 people. Well, the letter has to be printed, has to be folded, has to be stuffed. We chose to hand-write, hand-address the envelopes. Volunteers have to be gotten to do all that, lick the stamps, get them to the post office. I'm kind of in charge of that, so there's a lot of little things. So, the answer is as long as I can do it, I think, and as long as I think I'm being useful.

Brokaw: Well you certainly are!

Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association John Bredesen Interview

Bredesen: I don't see any reason to quit now.

Brokaw: I want to thank you for the interview.

Bredesen: Thank you.

End of interview.