

## How I Came to Interview Warren Buffett and His Mother for a Newspaper Article When I Was Just 26 Years Old

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I've been asked many times over the years how I came to be hired to interview legendary financial investor Warren Buffett *and* his mother Leila Stahl Buffett for a newspaper article so I thought I'd share the fun serendipitous story of how that article assignment ensued:

My husband Steve and I were living in the tiny town of West Point, Nebraska where Steve had taken a job at a bank and I was substitute teaching English at the high school there. When we bought our home in West Point, our neighbor Dick Lindberg came over to introduce himself when we were working in our yard one day and as it turned out, he owned the newspaper. When he learned that I was an English teacher Dick asked me if I'd ever like to write feature articles for their publication. Long having the dream of becoming a published writer since I was a young girl, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven at that invitation so I quickly said "yes" and he told me to come down to the office the next week.

So off I went and there sat the proverbial newspaper man Dick with his glasses down on his nose, his feet up on his desk, papers piled high all around him, and he promptly told me he was going to give me a mock writing test to write a sample feature article *right then and there*.

*Oh, the pressure.* ☺

I handed him my feature story when I was finished and he proceeded to read it in front of me and then he grinned and said, "You're good!"

My first assignment from him? Interview Warren Buffett's mother Leila Stahl Buffett since the Buffett family had donated to the new library, and because Warren's mother had longtime family ties to West Point they wanted that to be one of the stories in a special newspaper insert they were publishing about the John A. Stahl Library.

And so, I promptly proceeded to call the very lovely Mrs. Buffett on the phone and interview her for my article. She was so sincerely charming and gracious that I felt I'd known her forever and at the end of the call she said, "*Now, you need to call Warren too and even though I'm not supposed to give out his phone number I'm giving it to you anyway because well ... I'm his mother!*" And we both laughed. ☺ (And obviously *I did what she said* and called her son!)

I was paid the princely sum of just \$25 to write that article, but to this day so many years and so many feature articles and interviewees later, that assignment remains one of my most fun memories of my entire writing career.

