



AFTER SARAH ANN VARNER tells her story, Rob Cooper and Pam Pacelli will produce her interview as part of a "legacy DVD."

several well-known Memphis families, and in the process, captured much of the city's history. While creating a DVD for Dick Lightman, Cooper explains, an important part of the civil rights movement came into focus.

"Part of the Lightman story is the integration of the Malco theaters — their family business — and now that piece of Memphis history is preserved forever," says Cooper. "Another client, Sarah Ann Varner, is the widow of the former team doctor for Ole Miss when Archie Manning played there, so her DVD includes some of the football footage with him on the field with Archie. A project we're doing for Charles Wurzburg tells the story of his business, Cleo Wrap, and also takes us through the history of the labor strikes. It's incredible stuff."

Here's how it works. When Verissima is tapped for a project, the two thoroughly research the family and collect as many photographs and other pieces of the puzzle to tell the story. When working on a history for a Laurel, Mississippi, man, for example, Pacelli went to the Laurel Museum and borrowed materials to better illustrate the early years of the client's life. "He had no idea we did that, and when he saw the piece, he was shocked that many of the places he mentioned were there to illustrate his tale," says Pacelli. "We do more than just record someone telling a story. We fill in as many blanks as we possibly can."

Pacelli is tapped with conducting the interviews — a task in which her background as a therapist helps put camera-shy or reluctant individuals at ease — while Cooper mans the cameras. The finished product is set to music and carefully woven together in a mixture of chronology and theme.

"This is one of those things that people say they are going to do, but never seem to get around to," says Pacelli. "And the truth is, you don't have all the time in the world."

"When in doubt," interjects Cooper, "get the most critical family members on tape. What do they want their children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren to know? And that's who our clients really are. We'd like to create a way for a great-grandchild to open a magic box of sorts and have their great-grandfather walk out. That's what this is really all about." **M**

Life Savers

Capturing your family history is a phone call away.

by MARY HELEN TIBBS

GIVE THIS DUO 10 hours, and they'll give you a lifetime.

Armed with cameras and years of experience, the duo behind Verissima Productions will capture your family history, your life's work, or a combination of the two, and return a broadcast-quality DVD of the account, preserved forever for future generations.

Verissima is the creation of husband-and-wife team Rob Cooper and Pam Pacelli — a

perfect marriage, so to speak, of each one's talent. Cooper, a native Mississippian, began his career working for PBS and eventually moved into the corporate world, then to Boston, where Pacelli worked as a family therapist. The rest, as they say, is history.

Though the couple lives and works in Boston, Cooper's family ties to Memphis and the South remain intact. So in 1999, when they were asked to produce a documentary for the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis, they jumped at the chance not only to combine their talents, but to spend some quality time here.

The finished product, *The Jews of Memphis: A Biblical People in the Bible Belt*, took a year and a half to research and produce, and eventually aired on WKNO and other stations.

Not long after, the two formed Verissima Productions, and the company has grown steadily for the past two years, with much of the work coming from local clients.

Verissima has created "legacy DVDs" for

FOR MORE INFORMATION on legacy DVDs and Verissima Productions, visit verissima.com